The Iranian Reception of Islam: The Non-Traditionalist Strands

Collected Studies in Three Volumes

VOLUME 2

BY

PATRICIA CRONE

EDITED BY

HANNA SIURUA

BRILL

ISLAMIC HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION. STUDIES AND TEXTS

The Iranian Reception of Islam: The Non-Traditionalist Strands

Islamic History and Civilization

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Patricia Crone, 29 January 2004
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LEIDEN | BOSTON

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Editor's Preface

The origins of this collection of studies lie in Patricia Crone's February 2013 visit to Leiden, where she received an honorary doctorate from Leiden University and gave a lecture on how the field of Islamic studies had changed over her lifetime. Subsequent discussions between her and Petra Sijpesteijn over the possible publication of that lecture grew into the idea of compiling a collection of her recent, forthcoming and unpublished articles. Professor Crone herself selected, arranged and in some cases revised the articles to be included in the collection. Most of the articles are reprinted, but a few are published for the first time in this collection; these include articles 14 and 15 in volume 1 and articles 3, 8, 9 and 10 (the lecture mentioned above) in volume 3.

Each volume focuses on a particular theme. The first volume brings together studies on the community from which Muḥammad emerged and the book that he brought; this second volume is dedicated to Iranian religious trends both before and after the arrival of Islam; and the third volume treats Islam in the historical context of the ancient Near East, with special attention to materialists, sceptics and other 'godless' people. Each volume includes a bibliography of Professor Crone's publications.

All of the articles have been typeset anew, but the page numbers of the original publications (wherever available) are indicated in the margin. Where note numbering has changed in the reprint as a consequence of revisions, the original note numbers are given in superscript at the beginning of the affected notes.

I have edited the articles with a very light hand. Errors and misprints have been corrected, the author's revisions and additions have been incorporated, incomplete and previously forthcoming citations have been updated and the transliteration of Arabic and Persian has been standardised to follow the Arabic transliteration scheme of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (modified in the case of elisions). The few editorial interventions beyond these are bracketed and marked as mine ('Ed.'). Citation, punctuation and spelling practices in each article reflect those of the original publication, with only minor, silent changes.

I would like to thank Sabine Schmidtke, María Mercedes Tuya and Casey Westerman at the Institute for Advanced Study; Kathy van Vliet, Teddi Dols and Arthur Westerhof at Brill; Ahmed El Shamsy, Itamar Francez, M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, Masoud Jafari Jazi, Martin Mulsow, Bilal Orfali, Petra Sijpesteijn and Frank Stewart for help with queries; Mariam Sheibani for research assistance; Dana E. Lee for her editorial work; and especially Michael Cook, Professor

Crone's literary executor, who oversaw the finalising of the volumes once Professor Crone was no longer able to fill that role herself.

Hanna Siurua
Chicago, January 2016

Author's Preface

All the articles in this collection are concerned with the reception of the pre-Islamic legacies in Islam, above all that of the Iranians. 'Iran' in the title is a shorthand for the Iranian cultural area, meaning that it includes Iraq in the west and Transoxania (now Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan) in the east. The collection is not meant to imply that all Iranian Muslims were heretics or downright unbelievers. A great many of their luminaries were Traditionalists and *mutakallim*s, both Muʿtazilite and Ashʿarite, of the mainstream type, and Iran was also noted for its Sufis, including sober ones. But the region did have a religious and cultural legacy far removed from that of Traditionalist Islam, and Iranians also had a much stronger sense of continuity with their pre-Islamic past than did other conquered peoples. It is the effect of their distinctiveness that is the main focus of the articles in this volume.

Patricia Crone
Princeton, December 2014

List of Original Publications and Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge permission to reprint articles that originally appeared in the following publications:

1. 'Kavād's Heresy and Mazdak's Revolt', *Iran* 29 (1991), 21–42. Reprinted by permission of the British Institute of Persian Studies.

2. 'Zoroastrian Communism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 3 (1994), 447–462. Reprinted with permission of Cambridge University Press.

3. 'Ḵorramis', in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2011, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/korramis. Reprinted with permission.

4. 'Moqannaʿ', in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2011, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/moqanna. Reprinted with permission.

5. 'Abū Tammām on the Mubayyiḍa', in *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, ed. Omar Alí-de-Unzaga, London: I.B. Tauris and Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011, 167–187. Reprinted with permission.

6. 'The Muqannaʿ Narrative in the *Tārīkhnāma*: Part I, Introduction, Edition and Translation', with Masoud Jafari Jazi, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 73, no. 2 (2010), 157–177. Reprinted with permission of Cambridge University Press.

7. 'The Muqannaʿ Narrative in the *Tārīkhnāma*: Part II, Commentary and Analysis', with Masoud Jafari Jazi, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 73, no. 3 (2010), 381–413. Reprinted with permission of Cambridge University Press.

8. 'Al-Jāḥiẓ on *Aṣḥāb al-Jahālāt* and the Jahmiyya', in *Medieval Arabic Thought: Essays in Honour of Fritz Zimmermann*, ed. Rotraud Hansberger, M. Afifi al-Akiti and Charles Burnett, Warburg Institute Studies and Texts 4, London: Warburg Institute and Turin: Nino Aragno Editore, 2012, 27–39. Reprinted with permission.

9. 'Buddhism as Ancient Iranian Paganism', in *Late Antiquity: Eastern Perspectives*, ed. Teresa Bernheimer and Adam Silverstein, n.p.: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2012, 25–41. Reprinted by permission of the Trustees of the E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust.

10. 'A New Text on Ismailism at the Samanid Court', with Luke Treadwell, in *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards*, ed. Chase F. Robinson, Islamic History and Civilization 45, Leiden: Brill, 2003, 37–67. © Brill.

11. 'What Was al-Fārābī's "Imamic" Constitution?', *Arabica* 50, no. 3 (2003), 306–321. © Brill.

12. 'Al-Fārābī's Imperfect Constitutions', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004), 191–228. Reprinted with permission.

13. 'Pre-Existence in Iran: Zoroastrians, Ex-Christian Mu'tazilites, and Jews on the Human Acquisition of Bodies', *Aram* 26, no. 1 & 2 (2014 [2016]), 1–20. Reprinted with permission.

CHAPTER 1

Kavād's Heresy and Mazdak's Revolt*

I

The famous heresiarch Mazdak is generally believed to have been a communist active in the time of Kavād (488–496, 498–531), and to have been killed along with many of his followers by Khusraw Anōshirvān (531–579), Kavād's son and successor, after Kavād's attempt to implement his communist ideas had unleashed a popular revolt which plunged the Sasanid empire into chaos.[1] H. Gaube, however, dissents from this view. According to him, Mazdak may never have existed; even if he did, he played no role in Kavād's politics, nor did such doctrines as he may have espoused stir up social unrest: it was Kavād who mobilised the masses against the nobility in the name of communist ideas, while Mazdak was probably invented or misrepresented to take the blame for the king's unorthodox behaviour.[2] This is a claim apt to make a historian sit up in surprise. Though friction between kings and nobles has been commonplace in history, one does not often hear of kings stirring up peasant revolts against their noble rivals, for the obvious reason that the latter were the pillars of the established order: if the peasants destroyed the nobility, by what means was the king to restore order among the peasants? Whatever else may be said for it, Gaube's argument certainly makes Kavād's behaviour even more problematic than it already is. But is there anything to be said for it? It rests on the two facts that no contemporary source mentions Mazdak (though several refer to Kavād's communist phase) and that the later sources are full of contradictions. Both facts do indeed suggest that something is wrong with the standard account, but there is a less radical way of explaining them than that which Gaube proposes.

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* I should like to thank Prof. W. Madelung, Prof. S. Shaked and Dr. H. Halm for comments on this paper.

1 The basic works are A. Christensen, *Le règne de Kawādh I et le communisme mazdakite* (Copenhagen, 1925) (summarised in *idem*, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*[2] (Copenhagen, 1944), ch. 7); O. Klíma, *Mazdak, Geschichte einer sozialen Bewegung im sassanidischen Persien* (Prague, 1957); *idem*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mazdakismus* (Prague, 1977). See now also the helpful survey by E. Yarshater, "Mazdakism", in E. Yarshater (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. III (2) (Cambridge, 1983).

2 "Mazdak: Historical Reality or Invention?", in *Studia Iranica*, XI, 1982 (= *Mélanges offerts à Raoul Curiel*).

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Kavād was king of Persia twice. He was elevated to the throne in 488 and expelled in 496, whereupon he spent two years in exile among the Hephtalites; he regained his throne with Hephtalite help in 498 and ruled without interruption from then onwards until his death in 531.[3] All the sixth-century sources place his communist phase in his first reign. The sources in question are, first, the Syriac chronicle attributed to Joshua the Stylite which was compiled about 507, well before Kavād's second reign was over;[4] secondly, Procopius' account based on information gathered during the war of 527–531, in which he participated as Belisarius' secretary;[5] and thirdly, the history of Agathias, who died about 582 and who had access not just to Procopius, but also to notes taken by a Christian interpreter from the Royal Annals of the Sasanids.[6] (There are also a couple of lines by the apparently sixth-century John Diakrinomenos, who does not however add anything to Procopius and Agathias.)[7] Given the unanimity of the contemporary sources, Kavād's communist phase must be regarded as securely dated. In fact, the late Nestorian Chronicle of Si'ird also places it in his first reign,[8] and so do numerous Muslim authors: Ibn Qutayba,[9] al-Dīna-

3 Thus Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari* (Leiden, 1879), pp. 427 f. (In what follows I shall give the author of this work as Ṭabarī when the reference is to the translation and as Nöldeke when the reference is to the commentary). Kavād was deposed in 495 according to N. Pigulevskaja (*Les villes de l'état iranien* (Paris, 1963), p. 215), in 497 according to Gaube ("Mazdak", p. 111), and restored in 499 according to both; but neither offers any arguments against Nöldeke's reasoning.

4 *Chronicle*, ed. and tr. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882), § 20; cf. A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), p. 146.

5 *History of the Wars*, ed. and tr. H.B. Dewing, vol. I (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1914), I, 5, 1 ff.; cf. A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985), pp. 8, 152 ff.

6 A. Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XXIII–XXIV (1969–1970), pp. 128 f. = 129 f.

7 Diakrinomenos, in G.C. Hansen (ed.), *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1971), p. 157 (Epitome, fragment no. 557). The date of John Diakrinomenos seems impossible to fix precisely. His history ran from about 431 to 471 according to A. Cameron and J. Herrin (eds. and trs.), *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden, 1984), p. 39. But fragment no. 557 refers to Kavād's restoration and so must date from 498 at the earliest; and its wording reflects that of Procopius or Agathias (though he transcribes Kavād as Kōadēs where his two predecessors have Kabadēs), so it must have been written in the second half of the sixth century or later. Hansen places Theodoros Anagnostes/Lector in the early sixth century and dates the epitome of his ecclesiastical history, in which John Diakrinomenos is cited, to "probably after 610" (*Kirchengeschichte*, pp. ix ff., xxii, xxxviii).

8 A. Scher (ed. and tr.), "Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Séert)", part II, 1, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, ed. R. Graffin and F. Nau, vol. VII (Paris, 1911), p. 125.

9 *al-Maʿārif*, ed. M. ʿI. ʿA. al-Ṣāwī (Beirut, 1970), pp. 291 f.

warī,[10] al-Ṭabarī,[11] al-Masʿūdī,[12] Muṭahhar al-Maqdisī[13] and others.[14] All these sources, both Christian and Muslim, state that his unorthodox views were the very reason why he was deposed. However, neither the sixth-century sources nor the Chronicle of Siʾird mentions Mazdak, whereas practically all the Muslim sources claim that he was the moving force behind Kavād.[15] This is the problem to which Gaube draws attention.

Klíma, who was the first to discuss the sixth-century silence, initially argued that the Christians were simply ill-informed.[16] But Mazdak's absence from the contemporary sources contrasts strangely with his towering presence in later accounts: if he was really so prominent, how could contemporaries have overlooked him? Joshua was very close indeed to the events in terms of time and place alike, while Procopius' account is full of circumstantial and local detail which he must have picked up in conversation with Persians.[17] He knew the story of how Kavād's wife and/or sister helped the latter escape from jail, for example;[18] why did no story about Mazdak come to his attention?

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10 *al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. V. Guirgass (Leiden, 1888), pp. 66 f.

11 *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje and others (Leiden, 1879–1901), ser. 1, pp. 885, 886 f. = *idem*, *Geschichte*, pp. 141, 143 f.; cf. also Balʿamī, *Tarjuma-yi tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*, ed. M.J. Mashkūr (Tehran, 1337), p. 144 = *idem*, *Les prophètes et les rois*, tr. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1867–1874), [vol. II], *De Solomon à la chute des Sassanides* (Paris, 1984), p. 239. (This re-edition of Zotenberg's translation unhelpfully gives Ṭabarī as the author, omits marginal references to the original pagination and lacks volume numbers; but it has the merit of being generally available.)

12 *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. and tr. A.C. Barbier de Meynard and A.J.-B. Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1861–1877), vol. II, pp. 195 f. (ed. C. Pellat (Beirut, 1966–1979), vol. I, § 618).

13 *Kitāb al-Badʾ waʾl-taʾrīkh*, ed. and tr. Cl. Huart (Paris, 1899–1919), vol. III, pp. 167 f. = 170 f.

14 Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Taʾrīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ waʾl-anbiyāʾ*, ed. J.M.E. Gottwaldt (Leipzig, 1844), p. 56; Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, vol. I, ed. L. Caetani (in facsimile) (Leiden and London, 1909), p. 168; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ʾl-taʾrīkh*, ed. C.J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851–1876), vol. I, pp. 297 f.; E.G. Browne, "Some Accounts of the Arabic Work Entitled 'Niháyatu'l-irab fī akhbári'l-Furs wa'l-ʾArab', Particularly of That Part which Treats of the Persian Kings", *JRAS* (1900), p. 226; Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, ed. G. Le Strange and R.A. Nicholson (London, 1921), pp. 84 f.; Mīrkhwānd, *Taʾrīkh-i rawḍat al-ṣafā*, vol. I (Tehran, 1338), p. 774 = *idem*, *The Rauẓat-us-ṣafā*, tr. E. Rehatsek, part I, vol. II (London, 1892), pp. 369 f. (a confused account).

15 The exceptions are al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, ed. M.Th. Houtsma (Leiden, 1883), vol. I, p. 186, and the narratives B and C in Ṭabarī (Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 26 f.), where Mazdak is first mentioned under Khusraw.

16 *Mazdak*, p. 135.

17 Cameron, *Procopius*, p. 155.

18 Procopius, *Wars*, I, 6, 1–9, where she is Kavād's wife. She is a sister in the Islamic tradition,

Gaube is right that the sixth-century silence is problematic; it continued to worry Klíma too.

When Klíma returned to the problem twenty years later, he argued that Khusraw must have deleted Mazdak from the official records in order to save his father's reputation.[19] But this hypothesis is even less satisfactory than his first. Khusraw may well have revised the official records after his accession, but he cannot thereby have affected information transmitted before it: Mazdak's absence from Joshua the Stylite and Procopius thus remains problematic. Khusraw's revisions ought however to have affected the *Islamic* tradition,
22 given that most of it goes back to a Book of | Kings based on the very records from which Mazdak was supposedly deleted: Mazdak's presence in the Muslim sources thus becomes problematic too.[20] Klíma argued that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, the first translator of the Sasanid Book of Kings, inserted an account of Mazdak where he found it missing;[21] but where did Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ get his information from? He cannot have got it from the Book of Mazdak/Marwak/Mardak, which he translated too; for though this work is conventionally assumed to have been a Mazdak romance, it has now been identified as a piece of wisdom literature.[22] Besides, the Muslim sources contain information which is too precise for an origin in romantic fiction to be plausible (though they are full of romantic stories too).[23] It is presumably for this reason that Klíma only adduces the supposed Mazdak romance as evidence of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's famil-

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and also in the Chronicle of Siʾird (Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 127). But as Klíma notes, Zoroastrian marriage laws were such that she could have been both (*Mazdak*, p. 142); and she is in fact described as both in Balʿamī, *Tarjuma*, p. 145 = 239 (he had a son by her); cf. also Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, vol. I, pp. 774, 775 = part I, vol. II, pp. 369, 370, where Kavād sleeps with her with Mazdak's permission, Mazdak being the inventor of incestuous marriages (a role also ascribed to him by modern Zoroastrians, cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 325).

19 *Beiträge*, pp. 43 ff. (where Gaube's theory is rejected in advance: we are *not* to infer that Mazdak did not exist).

20 Cf. Nöldeke's introduction to his *Geschichte*, pp. xv ff.; Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 22 ff.; Klíma, *Mazdak*, pp. 7 ff.

21 *Beiträge*, p. 54.

22 A. Tafazzoli, "Observations sur le soi-disant Mazdak-Nāmag", *Acta Iranica*, XXIII (1984); the work in question is variously known as *kitāb mzdk/mrwk/mrdk*; Ḥamza assigns it to the Parthian period, so its subject matter cannot have been Sasanid; no book of Mazdak is cited in any account of Mazdak's revolt, and several references show the book of Marwak or Mardak to have contained wisdom.

23 Cf. Yarshater, "Mazdak", pp. 994 f., where the fictional themes (here assumed to have come from a *Mazdak-nāmag*) are listed.

iarity with Mazdakite material, not as his actual source: Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, he says, relied on his own knowledge, or on some account already in existence, when he inserted his account of Mazdak in the Book of Kings. But this does not solve the problem where Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ got his knowledge from unless we assume the pre-existing account to have been found in the Book of Kings itself. In short, Klíma's second hypothesis merely creates new problems without solving the one it was meant to remove.

Gaube stands Klíma's hypothesis on its head: Khusraw did not delete Mazdak from the official records, but on the contrary wrote him into them; Mazdak is absent from the contemporary sources because he played no role in the events which they report, but present in the later sources because Khusraw invented or redesigned him as a scapegoat for Kavād's misbehaviour. This does at least have the merit of offering a coherent solution, and there is no objection to it on the Greek or Syriac side, though it would have been to Gaube's advantage if Mazdak had figured in Agathias' account: his sudden appearance in a Greek author who used the Sasanid records some forty years after Khusraw's accession would have reinforced the suspicion that the records had been doctored. But Agathias' silence is not important.[24] Gaube's hypothesis is however hard to square with the Islamic tradition. Mazdak does not sound in the least like an apologetic invention here; there is nothing schematic about him, nor are there other suggestions of ahistoricity once the romantic embellishments have been discounted. Could Khusraw have thought up so convincing an account? And could a figure invented or reshaped by him have captured popular imagination to the extent of generating so much embellishment? It does not seem likely.

But there is an obvious chronological problem. If Mazdak was the man behind Kavād, he was active in the 490s; yet the sources are agreed that he was suppressed by Khusraw, in the 530s. Kavād was dethroned for heresy thirty-five years before Khusraw's accession, at a time when Khusraw had not even been born;[25] and there is no suggestion that he resumed his heretical activities

24 He explicitly says that the translator who furnished him with the extracts from the Royal Annals had abbreviated his material, so that silence in Agathias cannot be taken to mean silence in the Annals; and his account of Kavād's law was clearly dependent on Procopius (Cameron, "Agathias on the Sasanians", pp. 114, 156).

25 The Muslim sources have Kavād father Khusraw during his journey to the Hephtalites after his deposition, or on such a journey in the reign of his predecessor Balāsh; and since the latter journey is simply a duplicate of the former (Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, pp. 133 n., 137 n.), the story would imply that Khusraw was conceived in 498. But the story is obviously legendary. (For "an indication, if such be needed, that the tale is a fable", see Cameron,

after his restoration: both Joshua and Procopius provide detailed accounts of his second reign (up to 506 and his death, respectively) without breathing a word about communist activities on his part, or for that matter on the part of anyone else; some Muslim sources explicitly say that his heretical phase came to an end on his fall;[26] and as Nöldeke points out, he would hardly have been capable of conducting major wars against Byzantium if he had continued to alienate his clergy and nobility.[27] Yet Mazdak is associated with both Kavād *and* Khusraw, or with Khusraw on his own, in Zoroastrian and Muslim sources, be they Pahlavi,[28] Arabic[29] or new Persian:[30] Mazdak, they say, seduced the former and was killed by the latter. What, one wonders, was he doing in the thirty-five

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"Agathias", p. 158; incredibly, it *is* needed: the fable is regularly accepted at face value.) Some sources claim that Khusraw was seventeen, eighteen or nineteen at the time of his accession, meaning that he was born between 512 and 514 (cf. below, n. 52; S.H. Taqizadeh, "Some Chronological Data relating to the Sasanian Period", *BSOAS*, IX (1937–1939), p. 130, citing 'Awfī). This may be equally unhistorical. Given that Khusraw died in 579, it does however seem unlikely that he should have been born in Kavād's first reign.

26 Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, p. 68 (where the Persians realise that he *rajaʿa ammā kunnā ittahamnāhu*); Balʿamī, *Tarjuma*, p. 146 = 241 (where Kavād stops supporting the Mazdakites, though he continued to adhere to them in secret); Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, p. 292 (where Mazdak is killed prior to Kavād's restoration to the throne); Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. III, p. 168 = 171 (*fa-tabarraʾa minhum*).

27 Nöldeke, *Gechichte*, p. 462.

28 Mazdak seduces Kavād and is killed by Khusraw in the *Bundahishn* (B.T. Anklesaria (ed. and tr.), *Zand Ākāsīh* (Bombay, 1956), p. 277; missing from the translation of E.W. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, part I (Oxford, 1880)). He is disposed of by Khusraw without reference to Kavād in the *Bahman Yast* (B.T. Anklesaria (ed. and tr.), *Zand-î Vohûman Yasn and Two Pahlavi Fragments* (Bombay, 1957), pp. 102, 106; West, *Pahlavi Texts*, part I, pp. 193 f., 201; Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 20 f.). Mazdak is also mentioned on his own in the *Dēnkard* (J. de Menasce (tr.), *Le troisième livre du Dēnkart* (Paris, 1973), p. 318; below, nn. 42, 112), and in the Pahlavi commentary on *Vendīdād* (below, n. 127), while Khusraw is also mentioned in the *Dēnkard* as having combated unspecified heresy and tyranny (West, op. cit., part IV (Oxford, 1892), p. 415; Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 21 f.).

29 Cf. Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 26 ff.

30 These are mostly Muslim (cf. Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 26 ff.); but there are also two seventeenth-century Zoroastrian ones: a poetic account of Mazdak and Khusraw by a Kirmānī *dastūr* (in Dārāb Hormazyār, *Rivāyāt*, ed. E.M.R. Unvala (Bombay, 1922), vol. II, pp. 214 ff.; summarised by A. Christensen, "Two Versions of the History of Mazdak", in *Dr. Modi Memorial Volume* (Bombay, 1930)); and the Parsee *Dabistān-i madhāhib* (Calcutta, 1809), vol. I, pp. 164 ff. = *The Dabistán, or School of Manners*, tr. D. Shea and A. Troyer (Paris, 1843), vol. I, pp. 372 ff. (on which see also *EI*^{2}, s.v. "Dabistān al-madhāhib"; Christensen, "Two Versions", pp. 86 ff.; below, n. 165).

years in between? The simplest solution is that two different incidents have been conflated: the sources contemporary with Kavād's heretical phase fail to mention Mazdak for the simple reason that Mazdak only made his appearance after this phase, in the reign of Khusraw.

This hypothesis accords well with the fact that the sources associate Kavād and Mazdak with different doctrines and incompatible events. As regards the doctrines, the sixth-century sources unanimously describe Kavād as a communist in respect of women alone. According to Joshua, he re-established (*sic*, a point to which I shall come back) the abominable heresy which teaches that "women should be in common and that everyone should have intercourse with whomever he liked".[31] According to Procopius, he legislated "that Persians should have communal intercourse with their women"[32] which is also what Agathias and John Diakrinomenos tell us: "it is said that he actually made a law according to which women were to be available to men in common", as Agathias puts it, adding that "these sins were committed frequently and with full legality".[33] But of communism in respect of property there is not a word. The Nestorian Chronicle of Siʾird provides details of the facilities provided for the sins in question: Kavād built shrines and inns (*hayākil wa-fanādiq*) where people could meet and engage in incontinence.[34] And the Jewish *Seder ʻolam zuta* refers vaguely to sexual immorality at the courts of Persian princes, which Graetz, probably wrongly, understood as a reference to heretical practices.[35] But there is no reference to communism in respect of property in these sources either. Communal sex is of course a particularly scandalous idea, but the abolition of private property struck Muslim authors as almost equally horrendous, and it is hardly to be supposed that contemporaries would have remained silent if Kavād had launched an attack on aristocractic and ecclesiastical possessions.

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31 *Chronicle*, § 20.

32 *Wars*, I, 5, 1.

33 Cameron, "Agathias", p. 128 = 129; Hansen, *Kirchengeschichte*, p. 157.

34 Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 125.

35 H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. V (Leipzig, 1861), pp. 420 f., on the revolt of Mar Zutra, who supposedly conquered Mahoza with 400 men and ruled it for seven years: the rebels were defeated because they had taken to drinking heathen wine and engaging in fornication at the courts of princes. Presumably this simply means that they had been corrupted by court life (similarly Klíma, "Mazdak und die Juden", *Archiv Orientální*, XXIV (1956), p. 430). Besides, Graetz dates Mar Zutra's revolt to between 508–520 and asserts that the "Mazdakites" renewed their heretical activities after Kavād's return (ibid., p. 12); but Kavād did not renew his, as has been seen, nor (one assumes) did the princes who had deposed him for his heresy, so the dating is incompatible with the interpretation. (Klíma, op. cit., departs from Graetz in respect of dating and interpretation alike.)

23 Yet silent they were. By | contrast, practically all the later sources associate Mazdak, and thus Kavād too, with heretical views in respect of women and property alike.[36] Pigulevskaja solves this problem by blithely reading tenth-century Muslim accounts into sixth-century Greek and Syriac sources,[37] while Christensen harmonises by assuming Kavād's innovations in respect of property to have been of minor importance: perhaps they took the form of extraordinary taxes on the rich to alleviate the condition of the poor.[38] But complete silence in the contemporary sources on Kavād plus descriptions of revolutionary measures in the later sources on Mazdak hardly add up to evidence for moderate reforms by the former. We may take it that Kavād's heresy was only about women, whereas Mazdak's was about women and property alike.

As regards the events, the sixth-century sources are unanimous that Kavād's measures were unpopular. "The nobles … of his kingdom hated him because he had allowed their wives to commit adultery. … The Persian grandees plotted in secret to slay Kavād, on account of his impure morals and perverse laws", Joshua says;[39] Kavād's law "by no means pleased the common people (*plēthos*)", who rose against him according to Procopius.[40] Many later sources also state that his heresy led to his deposition.[41] Under Kavād the Persians thus rebelled *against* a heresy. But under Mazdak they rebelled *in the name of* one; and whereas Kavād's heresy had been imposed from above, Mazdak's heresy was sponsored by the masses. Mazdak's adherents were the poor, base, weak and ignoble plebs (*al-fuqarā', al-sifla, al-ḍu'afā', al-lu'amā', al-ghawghā'*), as numerous sources tell

36 In Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Cairo, 1927–1974), vol. IX, p. 79, Kavād adopts Mazdak's doctrine regarding *ibāḥa* of women without reference to property; but the account is brief and hardly meant to be exhaustive.

37 Pigulevskaja, *Les villes*, p. 198. Cf. also her handling, ibid., p. 208, of P. Bedjan (ed.), *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (Paris, 1890–1897), vol. II, p. 521 = G. Hoffmann (tr.), *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig, 1880), p. 52 (an episode explicitly set in the reign of Yazdgard II); and contrast her interpretation at pp. 218 ff. with the sober comments of S. Gero, *Barsauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century* (Louvain, 1981), p. 21 and note 40 thereto.

38 Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 345. According to S.W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, second edition, vol. III (New York, 1957), p. 56, Kavād *only* engaged in redistribution of noble property, there being no evidence that he tried to enforce communal access to women!

39 *Chronicle*, §§ 22 f.

40 *Wars*, I, 5, 1 f.

41 See the references given above, nn. 8–14. Cf. also the confused account in Eutychius, *Annales*, ed. L. Cheikho, part I (Beirut, Paris and Leipzig, 1906), p. 206, in which the Persian people consider killing Kavād *whereupon* he gets involved with Mazdak (here Marzīq).

us;[42] and there is general agreement that the crowds ran riot: they began by breaking into the royal granaries according to al-Thaʿālibī and Firdawsī (whose accounts are however largely fictional);[43] "they would break into a man's home and take his dwelling, his wives and his property without him being able to prevent them", we are told by Ibn Qutayba, al-Ṭabarī and others;[44] they "killed those who did not follow them".[45] Countless people followed Mazdak,[46] and immense numbers were duly slaughtered by Khusraw: no less than 80,000, 100,000 or even 150,000 were killed in one day in just one area, as several sources allege.[47] It is hard to agree with Gaube that Muslim accounts of Mazdak's revolt camouflage an original account of royal manipulation of the masses. For one thing, the Muslim sources patently describe a phenomenon directed *against* the authorities; and for another thing, there is no mention of an alliance between king and masses in the contemporary accounts of Kavād's communist phase; on the contrary, even the *plēthos* disliked his innovations according to Procopius.[48] We may accept that Kavād was a heretic who tried to impose his views on a reluctant populace (reluctant nobles above all), while Mazdak was a rebel who stirred up a peasant revolt: they simply did not act at the same time, let alone in alliance.

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42 Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, p. 69; Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, pp. 886, 893 = *Geschichte*, pp. 141, 154; Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Taʾrīkh*, p. 107; Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. III, p. 167 = 171; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, pp. 168, 177; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. I, p. 296; al-Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar akhbār mulūk al-furs wa-siyarihim*, ed. and tr. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900), pp. 598 ff. Cf. also the *Dēnkard* in M. Shaki, "The Social Doctrine of Mazdak in the Light of Middle Persian Evidence", *Archiv Orientální*, XXXXVI (1978), p. 295 = 297 (previously, and rather differently, translated in de Menasce, *Troisième livre du Dēnkart*, p. 212), for a reference to someone, presumably Mazdak, gathering hungry rabble around him by means of religious propaganda and allowing them to plunder.

43 Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 598; Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, ed. S. Nafīsī, vol. VIII (Tehran, 1935), p. 2301 = *idem*, *The Epic of Kings*, tr. R. Levy, revised by A. Banani (London, etc., 1967), p. 318.

44 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, p. 886 = *Geschichte*, p. 142; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, p. 292; Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. III, p. 167 = 171; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, p. 168; cf. also Eutychius, *Annales*, part I, p. 206; Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 600.

45 Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. III, p. 168 = 171.

46 al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiya ʿan al-qurūn al-khāliya*, ed. C.E. Sachau (Leipzig, 1923), p. 209 = *idem*, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. Sachau (London, 1879), p. 192; cf. also Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 598; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. I, p. 297.

47 Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, vol. II, p. 196 (ed. Pellat, vol. I, § 618); Maqdisī *Badʾ*, vol. III, p. 168 = 172; Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 605, cf. p. 606 (80,000); *Aghānī*, vol. IX, p. 80 (100,000); Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, pp. 90 f. (150,000).

48 Procopius may of course be wrong, or he may have meant the mass of the aristocracy; but though one may discount his *plēthos*, one does not thereby create evidence for popular support.

This hypothesis would also explain the proliferation of variations and contradictions in the later sources. It is obvious that once Mazdak had come to be seen as the moving force behind Kavād even though he was only suppressed by Khusraw, then the interval between Kavād's heretical phase and Khusraw's accession had somehow or other to be eliminated. It is for this reason that we are told, now explicitly and now implicitly, that Kavād adopted communist ideas *after* his restoration,[49] or that he was deposed for his heresy by *Khusraw*,[50] or that his heresy caused him to *abdicate* in favour of the latter,[51] or that he made the latter his *co-regent*,[52] or that the heretics *survived* his deposition or *came back* towards the end of his reign,[53] or even that Mazdak's revolt lasted

49 This dating is explicit in *Mujmil al-tawārikh wa'l-qiṣaṣ*, ed. M.Sh. Bahār (Tehran, 1318), p. 73; Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, pp. 586 ff.; it is implicit in all the accounts in which Kavād is a heretic towards the end of his life, cf. *Aghānī*, vol. IX, 79; Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Taʾrīkh*, p. 107 (contrast p. 56); Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 209 = 192, and the continuation in J. Fück, *Documenta Islamica Inedita* (Berlin, 1952), p. 79; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, ed. M. Qazwīnī and M. Mudarrisī Chahārdahī (Tehran, 1956), pp. 195 ff. = *idem*, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, tr. H. Darke (London 1960), pp. 195 ff.; Christensen, "Two Versions" p. 322 ff. (the Zoroastrian poem); *idem*, *Kawādh*, pp. 44 ff.

50 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 213 = 211; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, ed. ʿA. Iqbāl (Tehran, [1320]), vol. I, pp. 147 f. = E.G. Browne, *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristán* (Leiden and London, 1905), p. 93, with explicit reference to Niẓam al-Mulk; Christensen, "Two Versions", pp. 323, 325 (the Zoroastrian poem, which also has much in common with Niẓām al-Mulk).

51 Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, p. 88.

52 Cf. the *Bundahishn*, in Anklesaria, *Zand Ākāsīh*, p. 276 = 277 (where Khusraw takes action against the Mazdakites on reaching the age of majority without reference to the position of his father); similarly *Mujmil al-tawārikh*, p. 73 (where Kavād is still alive); compare the claim that Khusraw was seventeen when he deposed his father (the Zoroastrian poem in Christensen, "Two Versions", p. 323) or eighteen at the time of his confrontation with the Mazdakites (Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 198 = 199). Klíma inferred from the Zoroastrian poem and Niẓām al-Mulk that Khusraw had ruled in tandem with his father ("Über das Datum von Mazdaks Tod", in *Charisteria Orientalia*, ed. F. Tauer, V. Kubíčková and I. Hrbek (Prague, 1956), p. 140); and it is presumably also one of these sources (in conjunction with the tale of Khusraw's conception referred to above, note 25) that lies behind Baron's claim that Khusraw had acted as co-regent since 513 (*Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. III, p. 56). (Note, however, that Niẓām al-Mulk also describes Khusraw as eighteen when his father died, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 32 = 34.) But it is difficult to see how Masʿūdī arrived at the idea that Khusraw was active in government already at the time of Kavād's restoration, in which he allegedly played a leading role! (*Murūj*, vol. II, pp. 195 f.; ed. Pellat, vol. I, § 618.)

53 Cf. Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, pp. 67, 69; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, p. 292; Ṭabarī, ser. 1, p. 886 =

all the time from his first reign to Khusraw's accession.[54] What all these variant versions are trying to say is that a heretical Kavād gave way directly to an orthodox Khusraw, without a thirty-five year gap in between. But an explanation also had to be found for the problem that Kavād was supposed to have been in league with the very heretics who rebelled against the crown. Hence we are told that Kavād was *forced* to join the rebels, the latter having grown very strong,[55] or that he had to *pretend* to be on their side lest he lose his throne,[56] or that he was *deceived* into supporting people who were really against him;[57] some sources even think that it was the *rebels* who deposed him[58] or at least kept him in isolation while the grandees of the realm enthroned his brother:[59] Kavād escaped from *them* to become king again, which is why the Mazdakites had to be suppressed prior to his restoration,[60] Mazdak himself being killed at that time.[61] But how then did Mazdak and his followers come to be around at

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Geschichte, p. 142; Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, pp. 84 ff. Compare Graetz, cited above, n. 35; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 462; R. Frye, *Ancient Iran*, p. 324. (Neither Christensen nor Pigulevskaja seems to have noticed the problem.)

54 This view is explicit in Eutychius, *Annales*, part I, p. 207 (where the Mazdakites are massacred on Kavād's restoration, but nonetheless remain strong enough to wreak havoc in his kingdom, whereupon he dies); and it reappears in the secondary literature too, cf. R. Ghirshman, *Iran from the Earliest Time to the Islamic Conquest* (Harmondsworth, 1954), pp. 302 f.; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Religion de l'Iran ancien* (Paris, 1962), p. 286; J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*, vol. V (Leiden, 1970), p. 75, where Kavād's second reign is dominated by the struggle against the Mazdakites. Compare Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 107; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, vol. II, pp. 195 f. (ed. Pellat, vol. I, § 617), which could be taken to imply the same, as could many other sources which fail to specify whether the Mazdakites came back or had been active all the time.

55 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 886 = *Geschichte*, p. 142; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 209 = 192; al-Iskāfī, *Kitāb Lutf al-tadbīr*, ed. A. 'Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo, 1964), p. 131.

56 Browne, "Niháya", p. 226.

57 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 209 = 192, where the bait was a married woman Kavād fancied; cf. Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, p. 292 (Kavād was weak); Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, pp. 32, 198 = 34, 199 (he succumbed to Mazdak's wiles); Tha'ālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 596; Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, p. 84 (similarly).

58 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 886 = *Geschichte*, p. 142; Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. III, p. 168 = 171; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, pp. 168 f. (where this view is rejected); Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 29 ff.

59 Thus Eutychius, *Annales*, part I, p. 206 (where Jāmāsp, spelt Rāmāsf, is one of his *akhwāl* rather than a brother).

60 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 886 = *Geschichte*, p. 142; Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. III, p. 168 = 171; Eutychius, *Annales*, part I, pp. 206 f.; cf. also Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. I, p. 298; Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 29 ff.

61 Ibn Qutayba, *Akhbār*, p. 292.

the time of Khusraw's accession? Back to square one. Since all this wriggling and writhing is accompanied by efforts to fit in Kavād's flight to the Huns, his fathering of Khusraw, and his relations with his regent Sōkhrā and the latter's son Zarmihr, it is hardly surprising that the outcome is a confusing mass of similar, yet never quite identical accounts.[62] Gaube is right that some of them have an apologetic intent, but the apologetic element is minute compared with that of genuine confusion.

II

The argument so far, then, is that Kavād tried to enforce communal access to women in the 490s, only to be deposed by his nobility in 496, while Mazdak was a later heretic who tried to enforce communal access to women *and* property by raising a peasant revolt, only to be executed along with his followers by Khusraw in the 530s. The reason why the two episodes have been
24 conflated is undoubtedly that they were closely spaced | events in the history of the same sect, and I shall now examine the nature of this sect. The question of how the events are to be interpreted will be taken up in the last section.

There is nothing to be learnt about the religious views involved from the Greek authors, all of whom describe Kavād's innovations in terms of secular legislation; but according to Joshua, Kavād's communism was derived from "the abominable Magian heresy known as the Zaradushtaqan", which he reestablished (*ḥaddet*).[63] This heresy is also referred to in the Syriac History of Karka de-Bet Selok, a sixth-century Nestorian account written in Persian Mesopotamia, which credits a certain Zarādusht, described as a contemporary of Mānī (d. 277), with a heresy that existed now openly and now secretly until the time of Khusraw.[64] The heresiarch in question was Zarādusht Khrōsakān of Fasā according to the *Dēnkard*, which identifies him as the original propounder of the doctrine that women and property should be held in common;[65] and

62 See the summaries in Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 26 ff. (recapitulated in *idem*, "Two Versions", pp. 321 f.); Gaube, "Mazdak", pp. 117 ff.

63 *Chronicle*, § 20. (The view of Klíma, *Mazdak*, p. 156, that it reflects the name Zaradushtak, "little Zaradusht", is not right; cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 457.)

64 Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, vol. II, p. 517 = Hoffman, *Auszüge*, p. 49. On the date of the text, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 135.

65 M. Molé, "Le problème des sectes zoroastriennes dans les livres pehlevis", *Oriens*, XXIII–

that he was the source of Kavād's ideas is confirmed by the Chronicle of Si'ird (in which the author has some trouble distinguishing the third-century heresiarch from the original Zoroaster).[66] He was the source of Mazdak's ideas, too. According to al-Ṭabarī, Zarādusht b. Khurrakān of Fasā had introduced innovations into Zoroastrianism and many people had followed him: Mazdak was one of those who made propaganda for his views.[67] Miskawayh says much the same.[68] Al-Yaʿqūbī and others wrongly make him a contemporary of Mazdak rather than a third-century figure,[69] while Ibn al-Nadīm quaintly refers to him as "the older Mazdak",[70] but the sheer fact that they know him is important. Molé toys with the idea of taking the name of Zarādusht as a title, noting that this would make Zarādusht of Fasā identifiable with Mazdak himself:[71] Mazdak was Zarādusht in the sense of *mōbad*.[72] According to Klíma, on the other hand, it is Mazdak's name that could be taken as a title: Zarādusht was the

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XIV (1960–1961), p. 24 = 25. A fuller transliteration and translation of the same passage (deemed untranslatable by de Menasce, *Troisième livre du Dēnkart*, p. 31) is given in Shaki, "Social Doctrine", pp. 290 f. = 291 ff. where Zarādusht of Fasā has lost his patronymic, the word read as *Khrōsakān* by Molé being read as *dʿris*(*t*)*-dēn* by Shaki.

66 Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 125; cf. p. 147, where Khusraw suppresses Zarādusht's doctrine and imposes Manichaeism! Other sources distinguish effortlessly between the Zoroasters (cf. Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, p. 177, where the heretic is called "the second Zarādusht"), and they have different patronymics too, so there is no reason to regard the one as a doublet of the other (similarly Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, pp. 456 f.; but Molé, "Sectes", p. 25, toys with the idea of identifying them nonetheless, and de Menasce, *Troisième livre du Dēnkart*, p. 31, follows him; cf. also Klíma, *Mazdak*, p. 172, n. 4).

67 *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, p. 893 = *Geschichte*, p. 154.

68 *Tajārib*, p. 177.

69 Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. I, p. 186, where Khusraw executes Zarādusht b. Khurrakān along with Mazdak; Browne, "Niháya", p. 226, where he is a Persian nobleman supporting Mazdak. Klíma, who did not know the passage in the *Acta Martyrum* (discovered by Pigulevskaja), also describes him as a contemporary of Mazdak (*Mazdak*, p. 157); similarly Yarshater, "Mazdakism", p. 996.

70 *Fihrist*, ed. R. Tajaddud (Tehran, 1971), p. 406 (where the younger Mazdak is the historical Mazdak).

71 "Sectes", p. 25 f. with reference to Yasna, 19, 18 ("every land has a Zaradusht", sc. a religious chief) and the expression *zartushtrōktom* for the chief *mōbad* in Pahlavi writings.

72 Mazdak is in fact supposed to have been a *mōbad*, or even chief *mōbad* (cf. the references given below, nn. 159–160). Another two Zarādushts mentioned in the Muslim sources are expressly said to have been *mōbad*s too (one in 379 A.D. and the other in the time of the caliph Muʿtaṣim, cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, pp. xxxiii n, 457).

older Mazdak in the sense of first leader of the sect.[73] But whether one or the other name was a title or not, the Syriac and Muslim evidence leaves no doubt that Zarādusht of Fasā was a person separate from, and indeed much earlier than, Mazdak. Besides, they had different patronymics, Zarādusht being a son of Khrōsak/Khurrak while Mazdak was the son of Bāmdād;[74] and they are also said to have come from different places, Zarādusht being a native of Fasā, whereas Mazdak is said to have come from Nasā,[75] Istakhr,[76] Tabrīz,[77] Nīshapūr[78] or MDRYH, identified as Mādharāyā in Iraq by Christensen,[79] as the Murghāb in eastern Iran by F. Altheim and R. Stiehl.[80] In short, we may accept that Zarādusht Khrōsakān was the original propounder of tenets taken up by Kavād and Mazdak in succession.

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73 *Mazdak*, pp. 166 f., with reference to the *Fihrist* (above, n. 70).

74 Mazdak appears as the son of Bāmdād in the *Bundahishn*, *Bahman Yast* and *Vendīdād* (above, n. 28; below, n. 127), and in Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, pp. 894 = *Geschichte*, p. 154; Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 107; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 195 = 195; Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 596. Compare Ibn Isfandiyār, *Tārīkh*, vol. I, p. 147 (Bamdādān) = 93 (Nāmdārān); Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 209 = 192 (Hamdādān); Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, p. 177 (Qāmārd); Dīnawarī's Māzyār is presumably also a corruption of Bāmdād[ān] (*Akhbār*, p. 69).

75 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 209 = 192; Abū 'l-Maʿālī, *Bayān al-adyān*, in Ch. Schefer (ed.), *Chrestomathie persane* (Paris, 1883–1885), vol. I, p. 145 = H. Massé (tr.), "L'Exposé des religions par Abou 'l-Maâli", *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, XCIV (1926), p. 36; Balʿamī, *Tarjuma*, p. 143 (*az zamīn-i Khurāsān az shahr-i Nasā*; but cf. below, n. 78); Browne, "Nihāya", p. 226. Christensen emends Nasā to Fasā and sees confusion with Zarādusht's provenance here (*Kawādh*, pp. 41 n., 99; *L'Iran*, pp. 337, 339 f.). But the form Nasā is too stable for this to be convincing.

76 Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, p. 67; Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, vol. I, p. 774 = part I, vol. II, p. 369 (presumably from Dīnawarī, who is mentioned as a source at p. 776 = 371).

77 Thus the thirteenth-century *Tabṣirāt al-ʿawāmm* cited in Schefer, op. cit., vol. I, p. 158.

78 Balʿamī, *Du Solomon*, p. 238 ("du pays de Khorâsân, de la ville de Nischabour"). But Mashkūr's text has Nasā (above, n. 75).

79 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 893 = *Geschichte*, p. 154; cf. ibid., p. 547, where MDRYH is wrongly supplied with a definite article which would make Christensen's reading of it as Mādharāyā even more difficult than it is. Christensen's suggestion (*Kawādh*, p. 100, with reference to G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (London, 1905), p. 38) was cautiously accepted by Klíma (*Mazdak*, pp. 159 ff.).

80 "Mazdak und Porphyrius", in their *Geschichte der Hunnen*, vol. III (Berlin, 1961; reprinted from *La nouvelle Clio*, *V* (1953); also reprinted, in English, in *History of Religions*, 3 (1963)), pp. 72 f.; cf. also *eidem*, *Ein asiatischer Staat* (Wiesbaden, 1954), p. 200. For objections, see Klíma, *Mazdak*, pp. 160 f. The seventeenth-century Kirmānī *dastūr* outbids Altheim and Stiehl by making Mazdak come from India (Christensen, "Two Versions", p. 322).

The fundamental idea behind Zarādusht's heresy was that women and property engender envy, anger, hatred, greed and needs which would not arise if both were held in common:[81] women and wealth are the ultimate causes of practically all dissension among mankind.[82] But God had created all men alike[83] and placed the means of sustenance, including the means of procreation, on earth "so that mankind may divide them equally among themselves" (*li-yuqassimahā ʾl-ʿibād baynahum biʾl-taʾāsī/sawiyya*).[84] Women and property should be held in partnership like water, fire and pasture (*jaʿala ʾl-nās shirka fīhimā ka-ʾshtirākihim fī ʾl-māʾ waʾl-nār waʾl-kalāʾ*);[85] nobody was allowed to have more than others;[86] sharing was a religious duty.[87]

The sources are not clear exactly how the sharing is to be envisaged. The formulations just cited suggest collective ownership, and this is also what many other authors took to be the objective: Mazdak abolished marriage and private property according to Balʿamī;[88] he told his followers that "your wives are like your other possessions, they too should be regarded as common property", according to Niẓām al-Mulk;[89] he preached communal control of chil-

81 My formulation is indebted to Firdawsī on the "five demons" (*Shāhnāma*, pp. 2303 f. = *Epic*, p. 319); but compare the *Dēnkard* in Molé, "Sectes", pp. 24 f.; Shaki, "Social Doctrine", pp. 290 ff.

82 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, vol. v, ed. M.M. al-Khuḍayrī (Cairo, 1965), p. 16 = G. Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes* (Paris, 1974), p. 164; al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal waʾl-niḥal*, ed. W. Cureton (London, 1846), p. 193 = *idem*, *Religionspartheien und Philosophen-Schulen*, tr. Th. Haarbrücker (Halle, 1850), vol. I, p. 291; *Dabistān*, vol. I, p. 166 = vol. I, p. 377. On their common source, see below, n. 165.

83 "The Mazdakites … claim that God created the world as one creation and created for it one creature, that is Adam" (Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Malaṭī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh waʾl-radd ʿalā ahl al-ahwāʾ waʾl-bidʿa*, ed. S. Dedering (Istanbul, 1937), p. 72). "All are God's servants and children of Adam" (Mazdak in Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 197 = 197). Though the terminology is heavily contaminated by Islam, Mazdak presumably did argue something along those lines.

84 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, pp. 885 f. = *Geschichte*, p. 141; cf. Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, p. 292; Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. III, p. 167 = 170 f.; Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 600; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, p. 168; Eutychius, *Annales*, part I, p. 206; Balʿamī, *Tarjuma*, p. 144 = 239.

85 Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 193 = vol. I, p. 291; *Dabistān*, vol. I, p. 166 = vol. I, p. 377.

86 Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, p. 292; Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, p. 886 = *Geschichte*, p. 141; Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. III, p. 167 = 170 f.; Eutychius, *Annales*, part I, p. 206; Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 600; Firdawsī, *Shāhnama*, p. 2302 = *Epic*, pp. 318 f.; Malaṭī, *Radd*, p. 72.

87 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, p. 893 = *Geschichte*, 154; Balʿamī, *Tarjuma*, p. 144 = 239.

88 *Tarjuma*, pp. 143 f. = 239.

89 *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 198 = 197 f.

dren as well, according to the *Bundahishn* and Ibn al-Balkhī.[90] Nöldeke likewise believed Mazdak to have abolished private property and marriage, on the grounds that equality in respect of possessions cannot be maintained for long unless collective ownership is instituted and hereditary transmission of property eliminated.[91] But though this may well have been what Zarādusht had in mind, it is not how it worked out in practice. Kavād is said to have ruled that children born of extra-marital unions were to be affiliated to the husband:[92] his communist views on women notwithstanding, marriage thus persisted along with parental control of children and hereditary transmission of property. And a widely cited tradition has it that Mazdak and his followers did not institute collective ownership as much as engage in redistribution: they claimed that "they were taking from the rich and giving to the poor (*annahum ya'khudhūna lil-fuqarā' min al-aghniyā' wa-yaruddūna min al-mukaththirīn ʿalā 'l-muqillīn*) and that whoever had a surplus in respect of landed property, women or goods had no better right to it than anyone else".[93] Mazdak "ordered that people should be equal in respect of property and women" (*yatasāwū fī 'l-amwāl wa'l-ḥuram*), as al-Yaʿqūbī put it.[94] Mazdak "made people equal" (*sawwā bayna 'l-nās*), according to Ibn al-Athīr: he "would take the wife of the one and hand her over to another, and likewise possessions, slaves, slavegirls and other things, such as landed property and real estate" (*al-ḍiyāʿwa'l-ʿiqār*).[95] These statements clearly imply that private property and marriage alike were left intact, only inequalities being removed. Mazdak's view seems to have been that the rich should divest themselves of their surplus by giving freely, and that the poor were allowed to help themselves to the possessions of those who had more
25 than the rest: "when | Adam died, God let his sons inherit [the world] equally; nobody has a right to more property or wives than others, so that he who is able to take people's possessions or obtain their wives by stealth, deceit, trickery or blandishment is allowed and free to do so; the property which some people possess in excess of others is forbidden to them until it is distributed equally among mankind", as al-Malaṭī quotes the Mazdakites as saying (in terms obviously borrowed from Islam and with an emphasis on non-violent methods which suggests that the statement refers to later conditions rather than Maz-

90 Anklesaria, *Zand Ākāsīh*, p. 276 = 277; Ibn al-Balkhī, *Farsnāma*, p. 84.

91 *Geschichte*, p. 458.

92 Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 125.

93 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 886 = *Geschichte*, p. 141; similarly Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, p. 292; Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. III, p. 167 = 171; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, p. 168; Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 600.

94 *Ta'rīkh*, vol. I, p. 186; cf. Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 893 (*al-ta'āsī fī amwālihim wa-ahlihim*).

95 *Kāmil*, vol. I, p. 297.

dak's revolt).[96] This goes well with the claim that Mazdak sanctioned guest prostitution[97] and other forms of wife lending,[98] a measure for which he may have found inspiration in Zoroastrian law. According to the *Mātigān-i hazār dātastān* as interpreted by Bartholomae, a man could cede his wife (be she willing or unwilling) to another man in need, who would be entitled to her labour, but not to her property or to any children born of the union; in other words, he might lend her as he would a slave, and the deed counted as charitable.[99] The existence of such an "interim marriage" has been disputed by M. Shaki,[100] but Shaki implicitly outlines an interim marriage of another kind: a man without male issue might give his wife in *stūrīh* (loosely translatable as levirate) to another man even in his own lifetime with a view to procuring heirs for himself (*stūrīh* being more commonly arranged after a husband's death); he would retain his guardianship over his wife, in addition to his rights to any children she might bear,[101] and the *stūrīh* would (or could) come to an end on the birth of a son.[102] Or indeed (putting Bartholomae's and Shaki's institutions together),

96 *Radd*, pp. 72 f.

97 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 198 = 198. The tone is sensationalist and the example gross (cf. below, n. 113), but the claim is corroborated by Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 406, on the Mazdakites of Muslim times: they do not deny a guest anything, whatever it may be.

98 Mazdak wanted husbands to lend their wives to those who had none, and to swap wives from time to time with those whose wives were less beautiful than their own, or so at least according to the *Dabistān*, vol. I, p. 166 = vol. I, pp. 377 f. citing the *Dīsnād* (on which, see below, n. 165) without a shred of malice or sensationalism.

99 C. Bartholomae, "Zum sasanidischen Recht. I", *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie* (1918), pp. 29 f., 36 ff.; cf. also *idem*, *Die Frau im sasanidischen Recht* (Heidelberg, 1924), pp. 14 ff. (accepted by A. Perikhanian, "Iranian Society and Law", in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. III (2), p. 650). Barthomolae's institution was first adduced in explanation of Mazdakite ideas by Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 329 f., 344 f. Yarshater, on the other hand, adduces *Vendīdād*, IV, 44, according to which fellow-believers, brothers and friends asking for money, wife or wisdom should be given these things ("Mazdakism", p. 997); but this is less interesting because the passage hardly claims that one should give them one's *own* wife.

100 "The Sassanian Matrimonial Relations", *Archiv Orientální*, XXXIX (1971), pp. 324 f.

101 Ibid., p. 331, cf. pp. 327, 340; cf. also the passages in Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 303 n. The various institutions designed to procure heirs for dead men are helpfully summarised in Perikhanian, "Society and Law", pp. 649 f., 653 ff.

102 Shaki, "Matrimonial Relations", p. 330, on women as *stūr*s for life or for a limited period. Shaki does not relate this distinction to that between live and dead husbands; but whether *stūrīh* in favour of dead husbands could be limited or not, it stands to reason that a man who gave his wife in *stūrīh* in his own lifetime would want her back when the purpose of the *stūrīh* had been fulfilled. (For historical evidence of such "interim marriages",

he could lend her to another man so that the *latter* could acquire heirs.[103] One way or the other, there certainly seems to have been a Zoroastrian institution of wife lending which the followers of Zarādusht took up and generalised. But in doing so, they confirmed rather than abrogated the existence of marriage (and they obviously took male control over women for granted too).[104] The later Khurramīs also endorsed *ibāḥat al-nisā'* (as the Muslims were to call communal

"wife lending", "rent an inseminator" or whatever else one might wish to call it, see S. Wikander, *Der arische Männerbund* (Lund, 1938), pp. 11 f.)

103 It is hard for an outsider to avoid this conclusion. Shaki disagrees with Bartholomae on two counts. First, does the disputed passage say that a man may cede his wife to another who is in need *for* his children (Bartholomae) or to another who is in need *of* children (Shaki)? If the former, the recipient was a widower or divorcee unable to cope on his own; if the latter, he was presumably a man too poor to marry. The passage specifies that he must be in need through no fault of his own, which is compatible with either interpretation, but Shaki's interpretation is the more plausible: assisting a single parent may have been meritorious, but helping a man to have heirs was infinitely more important. Without male offspring a man could not pass the Chinvad bridge, so the fate of his soul, not merely his worldly welfare, was at stake; placing one's own wife at the disposal of such a man would indeed be the height of charity. Secondly, did the first husband make a straight gift of his wife (Shaki) or did he lend her for a specified period (Bartholomae)? Here Bartholomae would seem to have the better case, for if the first husband had ceded all rights to her, the *Nīrangistān* (cited in Shaki, "Matrimonial Relations", p. 324) would hardly have found it necessary to explain that she was not allowed to cohabit with both men at the same time. Shaki asserts that Bartholomae's institution would have been regarded as a great sin, but the passage adduced in support of this contention (ibid., pp. 338, 343 f.) speaks of a woman who *does* cohabit with two men; and his own *stūrīh* could clearly function as an interim marriage too. In short, just as a woman could be handed over to a *stūr* for the benefit of her own husband (alive or dead), so she could be placed at the disposal of a poor and kinless man who had no wife himself, remaining the legal wife of her first husband in both cases and returning to him (if still alive) after the task had been accomplished. Shaki seems to clinch this interpretation by quoting Isho'bokht as saying that a wife was like a fertile field which could be rented in the lifetime of its owner or after his death (Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 303, with reference to Sachau (ed.), *Syrische Rechtsbücher* (Berlin, 1907–1914), vol. III, p. 97); but unfortunately the quote is incorrect.

104 For Mazdak as a liberator of women, see Pigulevskaja, *Les villes*, p. 200; Klíma, *Mazdak*, p. 186; cf. also Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. III, p. 55, according to whom the Mazdakites insisted on the woman's free consent. But the Zarādushtīs plainly equated women with property, and it is only in connection with the tenth-century Khurramīs that female consent is mentioned (below, n. 114). When Shahrastānī says that Mazdak *aḥalla 'l-nisā'*, he means that he made women available to all, not that he "liess … die Frauen frei", as Haarbrücker translates (*Milal*, p. 193 = 291), followed by Pigulevskaja and Klíma (cf. the sensible comments of Shaki, "Social Doctrine", pp. 301 ff.).

access to women) without abolishing marriage thereby.[105] Kavād and Mazdak seem to have argued that nobody had *exclusive* rights to women or (in Mazdak's case) to anything at all: everything in a man's possession was available to others, ownership being common in the last resort, and anything he possessed in excess of others could be freely taken, the correct distribution being equal. But actual pooling of property, women or children was not apparently attempted.

Even so, Nöldeke is undoubtedly right that *ibāḥat al-nisā'* was meant in a drastically egalitarian vein. What the Zarādushtīs demanded was not simply that women hoarded in princely harems should be redistributed or that women should be allowed to marry outside their own class, that it should be cheaper to marry, that the rules of levirate should be relaxed, or the like;[106] but nor was it against hereditary transmission of property that their views on women were directed. What *ibāḥat al-nisā'* achieved was to obstruct the growth of social distance and (crucially in Kavād's case) to undermine the power of those who had a vested interest in its preservation. Communal access to women prevented the formation of noble lineages sealed off from the rest of the community by endogamous or indeed incestuous unions;[107] communal access to the wives of aristocrats destroyed the mystique of noble blood produced by generations of such unions, placing a question mark over the political entitlements with which such blood was associated. The horror of *ibāḥa* to non-Zarādushtīs lay precisely in the fact that it obliterated hereditary ranking. It worked by "obscuring the descent of every individual", as the *Dēnkard* complains.[108] "Genealogies were mixed",[109] "base people of all sorts mixed with people of noble blood", as we are told with reference to Mazdak's revolt.[110] "If people have women and property in common, how can they know their children and establish their genealogies?" as Zoroastrian priests asked Mazdak, who was supposedly dumbfounded, never having thought that far himself.[111]

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105 Cf. below, n. 114, and the twelfth-century Khurramīs in W. Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, N.Y., 1988), p. 10 (all women were available to everyone, but having two wives was a deadly sin).

106 Cf. Yarshater, "Mazdakism", p. 1000, for a list of what *ibāḥa* may have meant if it is not to be understood literally.

107 Cf. J. Darmesteter, "Le hvaêtvadatha", *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, XXIV (1891).

108 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 291 f.; cf. Molé, "Sectes", pp. 24 f. (both citing the *Dēnkard*).

109 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. III, p. 168 = 171.

110 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 893 = *Geschichte*, p. 154; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, p. 177.

111 Tha'ālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 602; cf. Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 203 = 202 f. The objections presented to communism here are almost identical with those in the *Dēnkard* (above, n. 108), and the context in which they are presented (a gathering of priests around

If Kavād and Mazdak modified Zarādusht's vision on women and property in the course of their attempt to implement it, the later Mazdakites, or some of them, seem to have changed it almost beyond recognition. The *Dēnkard* accuses them of tracing descent through the mother and of holding the property of sons and brothers in common,[112] thus conjuring up a society similar to that of the famous Nayar of Malabar (or for that matter Strabo's Yemenis), among whom ownership of land and livestock was vested in the matrilineal lineage, agricultural work being done by brothers while their sisters produced children by non-resident and temporary husbands.[113] In western Persia, to which the information in the *Dēnkard* is most likely to refer, Mazdakism would thus appear to have come to validate a local and, by Zoroastrian standards, highly unorthodox form of kinship organisation to which there is perhaps an allusion in Herodotus' account of Achaemenid Iran as well;[114] and Narshakhī

Khusraw) is almost identical with that in the *Bahman Yasht* (Anklesaria, *Zand-î Vohûman Yasn*, p. 102; Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 20 f.).

112 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", pp. 293 ff. (a new translation *of Dēnkard*, VII, 21, previously translated, though not very intelligibly, by West, *Pahlavi Texts*, part V (Oxford, 1897), pp. 88 f., and briefly mentioned in Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 22). As Shaki notes, this passage must refer to normal rather than revolutionary conditions ("Social Doctrine", pp. 304 f.); and since the heretics are explicitly called Mazdakites, it must refer to normal conditions after the suppression of Mazdak's revolt. (Shaki's interpretation ignores this point.)

113 R. Fox, *Kinship and Marriage* (Harmondsworth, 1967), pp. 100 ff., where other examples of matrilineal organisation are also discussed; Strabo, *Geography*, ed. and tr. H.L. Jones, vol. VII (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1965), XVI, 4, 25 (brothers are held in higher esteem than children, property is held in common by kinsmen, one woman is wife for all). Niẓām al-Mulk has it that if a man had sexual relations with a woman, he would put a hat on the door to indicate that the woman was occupied (*Siyāsatnāma*, p. 198 = 198). This is told in connection with guest prostitution, clearly in a sensationalist vein (all guests at a party, even twenty, would visit the host's wife one by one!). But the custom has nothing to do with guest prostitution, nor is it presented as such in Narshakhī, according to whom the descendants of al-Muqanna''s followers in Transoxania would put a mark on the door when they were visiting other men's "wives" (Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, ed. Schefer (Paris, 1892), p. 73 = *idem*, *The History of Bukhara*, tr. R.N. Frye (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 75 f., a remarkably sober account). Among the Nayar the men with visiting rights to a certain woman (of whom there were up to twelve) would indicate that they were visiting their "wife" by leaving a spear or a shield outside the house (Fox, *Kinship*, p. 101). In Strabo's Yemen they would place a staff by the door; cf. also the following note. Presumably there were customs of this kind in all polyandrous societies.

114 According to him, the Massagetes of the Caucasus used wives promiscuously; if a man visited a woman, he would hang his quiver in front of her waggon (*History*, ed. and tr. A.D. Godley (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1920–1925), I, 216; cf. the preceding note).

gives us to understand that Mazdakism came to perform the same function in Transoxania.[115] But there were also Khurramīs who used the creed to sanction monogamy.[116] The Mazdakite association with deviant systems is consonant with the fact that it was among isolated mountaineers (many of them Kurds) that Mazdakism survived,[117] but it is unlikely to throw light on the origins and nature of the heresy itself. Zarādushtism was undoubtedly a priestly response to mainstream Zoroastrian problems which only came to be adapted to local institutions after Mazdak's death.

At all events, Zarādusht's creed was not just | egalitarian, but also pacifist. 26
Kavād disliked war and bloodshed in his heretical phase;[118] he was a mild man who tried to deal leniently with his subjects and enemies alike, a fact which some construed as weakness;[119] and he was a vegetarian too: "the king eats no meat and holds bloodshed to be forbidden because he is a *zindīq*", as the ruler of the Yemen was informed.[120] The king proved warlike enough on his restoration.[121] Mazdak similarly wanted to eliminate war, hatred and dispute,[122] and he too was a vegetarian: according to Ibn al-Athīr, he held that "plants

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Presumably they too were matrilineally organised, though Herodotus does not say so. Of the tenth-century Khurramīs of Jibāl, or some of them, we are explicitly told that they accepted *ibāḥat al-nisā'*, provided that the women consented (Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. IV, p. 31 = 29; cf. also Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 406); but we are not told how they practised it or what their kinship system was. (*Pace* Yarshater, "Mazdakism", p. 1013, Maqdisī's information is based on personal information, not on heresiographical stereotypes; and it is not contradicted by the existence of marriage among the Khurramīs, still less by the Khurramī concern with purity, honesty and avoidance of harm to others!)

115 Cf. above, n. 113. Narshakhī also mentions another local arrangement of a peculiar kind in this passage.

116 Cf. Madelung, above, n. 105 (the area was Azerbayjan).

117 Cf. *EI*², s.v. "Khurramiyya".

118 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, pp. 888, 889 = *Geschichte*, pp. 148 f., 150; Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. III, p. 167 = 170; Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, p. 171; Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 125.

119 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 888 = *Geschichte*, pp. 148 f.; Scher, op. cit., part II, 1, p. 124; Sebeos, *Histoire d'Héraclius*, tr. F. Macler (Paris, 1910), p. 4 (where his peaceful relations with his neighbours are explained with reference to the slate of his army rather than his creed, neither Sebeos nor any other Armenian source displaying awareness that he was a heretic). On his supposed weakness, see also Ibn Qutayba, above, n. 57, and Abū 'l-Baqā', below, n. 236.

120 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 889 = *Geschichte*, p. 150.

121 He started a long war against the Byzantines as soon as he was back and is said to have slaughtered a huge number of people on his conquest of Amida (Procopius, *Wars*, I, 7, 29; Joshua, *Chronicle*, § 53).

122 Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 193 = I, 291.

and animal products such as eggs, milk, butter and cheese suffice as human food".[123] According to al-Bīrūnī, he told Kavād to abstain from the slaughter of cattle "before the natural term of their life has come" (*ḥattā ya'tiya 'alayhā ajaluhu*),[124] which is more ambivalent: it could be taken to mean that carrion was legitimate food, which Nöldeke rightly deemed unlikely,[125] or that cattle could be both slaughtered and eaten provided that it was old, which is a view attested in Zoroastrian literature,[126] or that cattle could only be slaughtered (but not eaten, as opposed to cut up for its hides, horns, etc.) after it had died. Possibly al-Bīrūnī mixed up Zoroastrian and Mazdakite doctrine here and possibly it was the third interpretation he had in mind; either way, the evidence for Zarādushtī vegetarianism is strong. (*Pace* Nöldeke, however, there does not seem to be a reference to his vegetarianism in the Pahlavi commentary on the *Vendīdād*;[127] nor does there seem to be one in the *Dēnkard*.)[128] The Khurramīs of the early Muslim world likewise disapproved of bloodshed, except in times of revolt; no living being should be killed in their view,[129] and they too were vegetarians: Bābak complained that the hands and breath of his

123 *Kāmil*, vol. I, p. 297; similarly Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, vol. I, p. 774 = part I, vol. II, p. 369.

124 p. 209 = 192.

125 *Geschichte*, p. 460.

126 M. Molé, "Un ascétisme moral dans les livres pehlevis?", *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, CLV (1959), pp. 178 f., citing the *Dēnkard* and the Pahlavi *Rivāyāt*.

127 The *Vendīdād* contains a long harangue against asceticism: having a wife is better than being celibate, having children better still, eating meat is better than abstaining therefrom and eating is better than fasting (J. Darmesteter (tr.), *The Zand-Avesta*, part I (Oxford, 1880), pp. 46 f.); the Pahlavi commentary explains "the impure heretic who does not eat" (i.e. who fasts) with the gloss "like Mazdak, the son of Bāmdād, who satisfied himself but abandoned men to hunger and death" (thus Klíma, *Mazdak*, p. 192; but cf. also the translations in Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 460; Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 20). Nöldeke, followed by Christensen and Klíma, read the gloss as a reference to Mazdak's vegetarianism. But one would have expected such a reference to have been offered in explanation of the statement that "he who fills himself with meat is filled with the good spirit much more than he who does not"; moreover, Mazdak is said to have satisfied himself (though only in Klíma's translation); and vegetarianism can hardly be equated with hunger and death (*sōk u marg*). It seems more likely that the commentator had the dire effects of Mazdak's revolt in mind: the means of livelihood were destroyed, as Maqdisī says (*Bad'*, vol. III, p. 168 = 171). Presumably the gloss was triggered by the description of the non-eating heretic as someone against whom one should fight.

128 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", pp. 294 f. and n. 61 thereto, 306. Though Shaki's emendation of the text may well be right, the statement that "they buy the milk of cattle" is not an obvious reference to vegetarianism.

129 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. IV, p. 31 = 28; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 406.

Muslim prison-guard stank of meat.[130] One twelfth-century Khurramī sect prohibited injury to humans, animals and plants alike.[131]

Possibly, Zarādusht was also an antinomian, but it is only of Mazdak's followers that we have any information on this point. According to the *Dēnkard*, they did not perform the external acts of worship.[132] They continued to ignore them after they had become Muslims (of sorts) as well: the Khurramīs did not perform the ritual prayer, observe the fast or otherwise adhere to the law, as several sources inform us.[133]

Three further points need to be made about the Zarādushtī heresy. First, neither Zarādusht's heresy nor its Mazdakite version was a species of Manichaeism. The idea that Mazdak was a Manichaean dissident goes back to Christensen and it is still widespread even though it was refuted by Molé almost thirty years ago,[134] and again by Shaki and Yarshater in more recent publications.[135] Christensen based his argument on a passage in Malalas according to which a third-century Manichaean by the name of Bundos proposed a new doctrine to the effect that the good god had defeated the evil god and that the victor should be honoured; this Bundos was active in Rome under Diocletian (285–305), but he subsequently went to Persia where his religion was called the doctrine of *tōn daristhenōn*, explained by Malalas as "the adherents of the good [god]" (probably from *d^{e}rist-dēn*, "professing the true religion").[136] On the strength of the fact that Malalas also calls Kavād *ho darasthenos*, Christensen identifies Bundos and Zarādusht of Fasā, construing Bundos as a Greek rendition of Pahlavi *bundag* or the like, meaning "venerable".[137] It must be granted

130 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 3, p. 1228 = *idem*, *The Reign of Mu'taṣim*, tr. E. Marin (New Haven, 1951), p. 52.

131 Madelung, *Religious Trends*, p. 10.

132 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 294.

133 Narshakhī, *Bukhārā*, p. 73 = 75; al-Nawbakhtī, *Kitāb firaq al-Shī'a*, ed. H. Ritter (Istanbul, 1931), p. 42; al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna 'l-firaq*, ed. P.K. Hitti (Cairo, 1924), p. 163 = *idem*, *Moslem Schisms and Sects*, tr. A.S. Halkin, part II (Tel Aviv, 1935), p. 90; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 243 = 244; Madelung, *Religious Trends*, p. 10.

134 "Sectes", pp. 17 ff.; cf. *idem*, "Ascétisme moral", pp. 167.

135 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", pp. 298 ff.; *idem*, "The Cosmogonical and Cosmological Teachings of Mazdak", *Acta Iranica*, XI (1985) (*Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*); Yarshater, "Mazdakism", pp. 995 ff.

136 *Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831), pp. 309 f. = *idem*, *Chronicle*, tr. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys and R. Scott (Melbourne, 1986), p. 168 (xii, 42); cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 457, n. 1; Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 97 n.

137 *Kawādh*, pp. 96 ff.; *idem*, *L'Iran*, pp. 337 f.; cf. Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 429 = 248 (xviii, 9).

that there is an odd coincidence here, and all the more so in that the *Dēnkard* could be taken to say that Zarādusht of Fasā was called *d^{e}ris*[*t*]*-dēn* (though the word could also be read as Khrōsakān),[138] that various garbled epithets of Kavād in Muslim sources could likewise be read as *d^{e}rist-dēn* (though this reading is not compelling),[139] and that the appellation *al-ʿadliyya* and *madhhab-i ʿadl* attested in Muslim sources for the Mazdakite sect could be taken as a translation of the same term (on the assumption that *d^{e}rist* could mean "just" as well as "true", which is not however obvious).[140] It may also be added that al-Iskāfī has Mazdak come from Syria.[141] But even so, Christensen's theory is hard to accept.[142] Al-Iskāfī's testimony is best discounted, partly because *adab* works are unreliable sources of historical information and partly because it is Bundos/Zarādusht rather than Mazdak who ought to have come from (or via) Syria. If "Mazdak" was a title, as Klíma argued, one could of course take al-Iskāfī's statement as a confused reflection of the fact that the *older* Mazdak came from Syria and seek support for this view in the fact that al-Iskāfī has his Mazdak go to Fars, the province with which Zarādusht is associated. But conjectures based on confusion do not make good evidence. Malalas' testimony should probably be discounted too. It is not very likely that a native of a provincial town of Fars should have travelled all the way to Rome and made it as a preacher there before going back to found a sect in Iran; conversely, if Bundos was a Roman (or other non-Persian resident of Rome), how did the Farsīs come to accept him as a religious authority? A Syriac-speaking citizen of the Roman empire might well have made it as a preacher in Iraq, but surely not in Fasā; that Zarādusht came from Fasā is however a point on which Zoroastrian and Muslim sources are agreed. No communist views are reported for Bundos, and no assertion regarding the victory of the good god is

138 Cf. above, n. 65.

139 Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 94 f., with reference to Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Taʾrīkh*, p. 56; *Mujmil al-tawārikh*, p. 36; and Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, p. 602. For the uncertainty of the reconstruction, see Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 135 n. It was also deemed unconvincing by Altheim and Stiehl, "Mazdak und Porphyrius", p. 75 and n. 8 thereto.

140 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 300, with reference to Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, p. 168, and Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, p. 84.

141 *Lutf al-tadbīr*, p. 130.

142 Similarly Altheim and Stiehl, op. cit., p. 75 and n. 8 thereto (where it is however replaced by an even wilder theory); Duchesne-Guillemin, *Religion de l'Iran*, p. 286 (where the views reported for Bundos are nonetheless presented as Mazdakite doctrine in the next paragraph, Malalas being ranked with Shahrastānī as a key source on Mazdakite ideas!).

attested for Zarādusht, or for any of his followers,[143] so that all they have in common is the appellation *dᵉrist-dēn.* If there is any significance to this, all one can say is that Malalas' story is too garbled for us to retrieve it. But even if one accepts that Bundos and Zarādusht are somehow related, it does not in any way follow that Zarādusht's creed was a species of Manichaeism, for Malalas plainly uses that word in the completely nonspecific sense of "dualist heresy".[144] Obviously, | Zarādusht was a dualist. Zoroastrian, Christian and 27
Muslim sources are however agreed that his dualism was Zoroastrian rather than Manichaean.

Thus the *Dēnkard* refers to him as heretic who came up with the wrong answer to a Zoroastrian problem,[145] while the History of Karka de-Bet Selok credits him and Mānī with different heresies, not, as Pigulevskaja would have it, the same.[146] Al-Ṭabarī describes his sect as a development within Zoroastrianism (*milla … ibtadaʿahā fī ʾl-majūsiyya*);[147] and it is similary described by al-Yaʿqūbī[148] and Ibn al-Nadīm.[149] As for Kavād, the abominable Zarādushtī heresy that he took up was Zoroastrian (*de-magushuta*),[150] and his religion is likewise described as Zoroastrianism (*majūsiyya*) in the Chronicle of Siʾird;[151] the description is correct for he tried to impose fire-worship on the Armenians in his heretical phase.[152] Mazdak, too, is classified as a Zoroastrian by Ibn al-Nadīm;[153] and Mazdak was also a Zoroastrian according to the Pahlavi books,

143 Both Christensen and Klíma contrive to find an echo of it in Mazdak's view that light acts knowingly whereas darkness does not (Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 340; Klíma, *Mazdak*, p. 183). But this is farfetched (cf. below, n. 180).

144 Cf. Molé, "Sectes", pp. 17 f. Yarshater's explanation ("Mazdakism", pp. 997 f.) that the Mazdakites were known as Manichaeans because their enemies in Iran branded them as such is unconvincing (they are not branded as such in the Zoroastrian books) and at any rate superfluous.

145 Molé, op. cit., pp. 18 f., 25; cf. *idem*, "Ascetisme moral", p. 167.

146 *Les villes*, p. 198.

147 *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, p. 893 = *Geschichte*, p. 154.

148 *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 1, p. 186, where Khusraw kills Mazdak for his communism and Zarādusht b. Khurrakān for his innovations within Zoroastrianism (*limā ibtadaʿa fī ʾl-majūsiyya*).

149 *Fihrist*, p. 406.

150 Joshua, *Chronicle*, § 20. (Rejected by Klíma, *Mazdak*, p. 172, n. 4.)

151 Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 125.

152 Joshua, *Chronicle*, § 20. (Rejected by Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 110.) Yarshater adduces Procopius, *Wars*, I, 7, 2–4, where Kavād tries to make the Iberians adopt Zoroastrian rites ("Mazdakism", p. 996 n.); but this passage refers to the period after his restoration, when he had ceased to be a heretic.

153 *Fihrist*, p. 406.

which depict him as a heretic, not as a Manichaean (Mānī being seen as the founder of a new religion);[154] Mazdak modified Zoroaster's religion according to al-Bīrūnī, Abū 'l-Maʿālī and Ibn al-Athīr, all of whom clearly mean the original prophet, not Zarādusht of Fasā;[155] he proposed a new interpretation of "the book of Zoroaster known as the Avesta", according to al-Masʿūdī, al-Bīrūnī and al-Khwārizmī, and it was for this reason that he was known as a *zindīq*.[156] He claimed to be a prophet sent to restore the religion of Zoroaster according to Niẓām al-Mulk.[157] He aspired to the spiritual leadership of the religion of Ohrmazd according to the *Dēnkard* (in a passage on which he is not however explicitly named).[158] What is more, he is said to have been a *mōbad*[159] or even chief *mōbad*,[160] that is to say, a member of the Zoroastrian priesthood; and though he is more likely to have been a minor priest than a leader of the clerical hierarchy (a position ascribed to him on the basis of his supposed association with Kavād), his allegiance to that hierarchy is not in doubt, for he (or a follower of his) compares two divine powers to the chief *mōbad* and chief *hērbad* in the fragment in cosmology preserved by al-Shahrastānī.[161] He worshipped fire, too, for he had his own views on the number and distribution of fire-temples;[162] and he allegedly proved the truth of his religion by making a fire speak,[163] a miracle which is moreover borrowed from the life of Zoroaster.[164] He also appears as

154 Molé, "Sectes", p. 14; Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 298.

155 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 209 = 192; Abū 'l-Maʿālī, *Bayān*, p. 145 = 36; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. I, p. 296.

156 Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 101; al-Khwārizmī, *Kitāb Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm*, ed. G. van Vloten (Leiden, 1895), p. 37 f.; Bīrūnī, in Fück, *Documenta Islamica Inedita*, p. 79 (adding that it was in a metaphorical vein that the Manichaeans were likewise known as *zindīq*s); cf. Molé, "Sectes", pp. 1 ff., on the meaning of this word.

157 *Siyāsatnāma*, pp. 195 f. = 196.

158 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 295 = 297.

159 Masʿūdī, *Tanbih*, p. 101; Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *Taʾrīkh*, p. 107.

160 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 209 = 192; Khwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ*, p. 37; Niẓām, al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, p. 195 = 195; *Mujmil al-tawārikh*, p. 73.

161 As Yarshater notes ("Mazdakism", p. 997, with reference to Sharastānī, *Milal*, p. 193 = vol. I, p. 292).

162 Cf. Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1885) p. 247; repeated in Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, ed. J.-D. Tihrānī (Tehran, 1353), p. 89.

163 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, pp. 196 f. = 195 f.

164 Molé, "Sectes", pp. 22 f. And note that *Zoroastrian* priests at the court of Yazdgard I are credited with an attempt at the same miracle when they felt threatened by the Christian Maruta (Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 67; Klíma, *Beiträge*, pp. 55 f.; add *Chronicon Anonynum ad Annum Christi 1234 Pertinens*, ed. and tr. J.-B. Chabot (Louvain, 1920–1937) vol. I, pp. 174 f. = vol. II, pp. 137 f.).

a Zoroastrian in the *Dabistān-i madhāhib*, the author of which relied on Mazdakite informants and an alleged book of Mazdak's entitled the *Dīsnād*;[165] and his speeches in Niẓām al-Mulk, Firdawsī and other sources are wholly Zoroastrian too.[166]

The fact that Mazdakism originated within Zoroastrianism does not of course rule out the possibility that Zarādusht and/or Mazdak were influenced by Manichaeism; but where is the influence supposed to be? In terms of ethos, the two heresies were diametrically opposed. Manichaeism was a world-renouncing religion which taught liberation from matter through abstention

165 *Dabistān*, vol. I, pp. 164 ff. = vol. I, pp. 372 ff. This is the only surviving account to be favourable to Mazdakism ("Mazdak was a holy and learned man"), so the author's claim to have used Mazdakite informants is hard to reject even though we have no other evidence that Mazdakism/Khurramism survived into the seventeenth century (cf. pp. 166 f. = 378, where we are told that they lived as Muslims and had both Zoroastrian and Muslim names, several of which are given). It was these informants who showed the author a copy of Mazdak's book, entitled the *Dīsnād*, which had supposedly been translated from old into new Persian. But when the author quotes from this book, he reproduces the same passages as Shahrastānī and ʿAbd al-Jabbār (cf. above, n. 82, 85: below, n. 180 f.) except that he omits one of theirs (below, n. 172) and adds one which they do not have (above, n. 98). He cannot have lifted his *Dīsnād* passages from Shahrastānī (as implied by Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 301), let alone from ʿAbd al-Jabbār, partly because several of his quotes are longer and partly because of the quote they lack. All three, then, must have used a common source. But if Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (the ultimate informant of Shahrastānī and ʿAbd al-Jabbār) and the much later author of the *Dabistān* had independently excerpted a Mazdakite work entitled the *Dīsnād*, one would have expected greater diversity in the passages chosen. The common source must thus be Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq himself, be it directly or (more probably) via Nawbakhtī, whose account was the direct source of Shahrastānī and ʿAbd al-Jabbār (cf. W. Madelung, "Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq über die Bardesaniten, Marcioniten und Kantäer", in H. Roemer and A. Noth (eds.), *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients, Festschrift für Berthold Sputer* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 210 f., 214 n.). Possibly, the Khurramīs had extracted Abū ʿĪsā's account of Mazdakism from Nawbakhtī's work as a true statement of their own beliefs, translating it into Persian and eventually ascribing it to Mazdak himself; but where the title came from and what it meant is hard to say (Shaki's suggestion, "Social Doctrine", p. 301, that it reflects an original *Dᵉrist-nāmag* is not persuasive).

166 Cf. the tangle in which Klíma gets caught in his attempt to accommodate Christensen's theory: it is certain that Mazdak's doctrine arose out of speculation about the Manichaean faith (*Mazdak*, p. 183), but it is completely clear from the *Dīsnād*, Niẓam al-Mulk's *Siyāsat-nāma* and other sources that he based himself on his own interpretation of the holy texts of the Zoroastrians (p. 200); his speeches in Firdawsī are wholly Zoroastrian, but that was simply because Zoroastrianism was the only religious language the Iranians understood: he used it as a means of propaganda (p. 195); yet his doctrine cannot really be described as a reform of Manichaeism (p. 205).

from procreation, bloodshed and material possessions. Zarādusht and his followers by contrast taught equal access to all the good things of life, including women and material possessions.[167] Christensen understands Mazdak's vegetarianism as an attempt to avoid entanglement in matter,[168] and Carratelli and others follow suit by crediting the Mazdakites with abstention from sex and material goods as well in their supposed effort to kill desire![169] But unlike the Manichaeans, the followers of Zarādusht were vegetarians because life was good, not because bloodshed would entangle them in matter. Their general idea (as reported with particular clarity for later Khurramīs) was that everyone should be nice to everyone else, and that all pleasurable things should be allowed as long as they did not harm the interests of others, animals included.[170] There is a strange statement in al-Shahrastānī, citing Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq, to the effect that Mazdak enjoined *qatl al-anfus*, "killing of souls/selves", as a means of liberation from evil and darkness, which Christensen took to mean that he enjoined asceticism.[171] But in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's and ʿAbd al-Jabbār's versions of Abū ʿĪsā, the reference is to actual killing;[172] Christensen's interpretation of the passage is thus untenable.[173] There is in fact no reason at all to assume that the Mazdakites practised asceticism:[174] though Mīrkhwānd, a fifteenth-century author, claims that Mazdak "wore woollen clothing and

167 God made over the world to Adam so that he could "eat of its foods, drink of its drinks, enjoy its pleasures and marry its women"; and the sons of Adam inherited it in equal measure (Malaṭī, *Radd*, p. 72).

168 *Kawādh*, pp. 102 f.; *idem*, *L'Iran*, pp. 342 f.

169 G. Pugliese Carratelli, "Les doctrines sociales de Bundos et de Mazdak", *Acta Iranica*, 11 (1974), pp. 286 f.; Duchesne-Guillemin, *Religion de l'Iran ancien*, p. 286; *idem*, "Zoroastrian Religion", in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. III (2), p. 892.

170 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. IV, p. 31 = 28 f.; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 406; Madelung, *Religious Trends*, p. 10; cf. also Malaṭī above, n. 167.

171 *Milal*, p. 193 = vol. I, p. 291; Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 103; *idem*, *L'Iran*, p. 342.

172 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, vol. V, pp. 16, 65 = Monnot, *Penseurs*, pp. 165, 237; Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārizmī, *Kitāb al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. W. Madelung (London, 1991), 584 (cf. Madelung, "Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq"; my thanks to Professor Madelung for transcribing the relevant passage for me). The *Dabistān* does not cite Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq/the *Dīsnād* on this point.

173 Compare Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 92 = 138, where the expression also refers to literal killing (the Najadāt held *taqiyya* to apply *wa-in kāna fī qatl al-nufūs*).

174 The existence of Mazdakite asceticism is accepted by Yarshater ("Mazdakism", pp. 1013 f.), with reference to Shahrastānī on *qatl al-anfus*, which is not about ascetism (above, nn. 172 f.) and the Pahlavi commentary on the *Vendīdād*, the interpretation of which is doubtful (above, n. 127). I thus cannot agree with Madelung that a current of asceticism among the Khurramīs is "well attested" (*Religious Trends*, p. 5, with reference to Yarshater).

engaged in constant devotion",[175] all early sources give us to understand that Mazdak preached elimination of desire through fulfilment; of one Mazdakite sect we are explicitly told that they rejected the asceticism of the Marcionites, with whom they otherwise had much in common.[176] But what then does Abū ʿĪsā's statement mean? Since he knew that Mazdak was a pacifist,[177] he can hardly have credited the latter with a recommendation of ritual murder; but he may well have meant that Mazdak permitted killing, normally prohibited, under conditions of revolt, which is what the later Mazdakites took to be the case;[178] and he may further have stated that Mazdak rationalised this dispensation on the grounds that opponents [so overcome by evil as to force the believers into revolt] should be killed because there was no other way of releasing their souls. But this is not a Manichaean view. No doubt Mazdak's heresy *resembled* Manichaeism, as Abū ʿĪsā says with reference to Mazdak's belief in two principles,[179] but then what dualism did not? The fact that Abū ʿĪsā compares it with Manichaeism rather than Zoroastrianism merely illustrates the fact that Manichaeism was the most important form of dualism to early Muslims, being infinitely more intelligible, enticing and dangerous than Zoroastrianism; it does not mean that Manichaeism and Mazdakism were especially closely related. Like all the Iranian dualists, | Mazdak had 28
views on the nature of light and darkness, but his views were Zoroastrian, not Manichaean.[180] If Abū ʿĪsā (or an anonymous informant) is to be trusted, Mazdak had certainly been exposed to Gnostic influence in respect of his cosmology,[181] but there is nothing specifically Manichaean about this influ-

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Shaki also accepts Mazdakite asceticism, though on what grounds is not clear ("Cosmogonical and Cosmological Teachings", p. 543, cf. p. 528).

175 *Rawḍa*, vol. I, p. 774 = part I, vol. II, p. 369.

176 Madelung, *Religious Trends*, p. 6 (on the Māhāniyya).

177 Cf. above, n. 122.

178 Cf. above, n. 129.

179 Shahrastānī, *Milal*, pp. 192 f. = vol. I, p. 291.

180 According to Abū ʿĪsā al-Warraq, he differed from the Manichaeans in that in his view light had a will and acted knowingly whereas darkness did not (Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 193 = vol. I, p. 291; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, vol. V, p. 16 = Monnot, *Penseurs*, p. 165; *Dabistān*, vol. I, p. 165 = vol. I, p. 375, with reference to Mazdak's *Dīsnād*). Abū ʿĪsā reports the same view for the Daisānites, once more noting that it was not Manichaean (the divergence being over the nature of darkness, not that of light), cf. Madelung, "Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq", p. 212. For its Zoroastrian origins, see Shaki, "Cosmogonical and Cosmological Teachings", pp. 529 f.

181 Shahrastānī, *Milal*, pp. 193 = vol. I, pp. 291 ff.; *Dabistān*, vol. I, pp. 165 f. = vol. I, pp. 375 ff.; cf. H. Halm, "Die Sieben und die Zwölf. Die ismāʿīlitische Kosmogonie und das Mazdak-

ence; some even conjecture it to have been neo-Platonic;[182] Madelung suggests that it was Kanthaean.[183] The later Khurramīs likewise subscribed to a number of beliefs commonly associated with Gnosticism, notably reincarnation of the soul and periodic incarnation of the deity (or, less radically, of messengers) on earth;[184] and they shared with the Manichaeans the concept of the moon as a soul-carrying vessel which waxes and wanes in accordance with its freight.[185] But they need not have borrowed any of these ideas from the Manichaeans,[186] and they were in any case quite unlike the Manichaeans in their ethos, a fact well captured by the fact that they came to be known as Khurramīs or Khurramdīnīs, "adherents of the joyous religion". Zarādushtism was not a religion of cosmic alienation in either its original or its later versions; it did not preach that man is a stranger in this world, a fallen soul or spark of light trapped in matter by mistake, nor did it teach asceticism as a means of escape. It did say that the world has arisen through a deplorable mixture of light and darkness to which man should respond by trying to vanquish darkness and its evil creations (notably by avoiding discord and bloodshed), but then so did Zoroastrianism. Clearly Zoroastrianism was the common source of Gnostic dualism and the Zarādushtī/Mazdakite/Khurramī religion; the latter sprang directly from it, not from a Gnostic offshoot,[187] and it continued

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Fragment des Šahrastānī", in *XVIII. Deutscher Orientalistentag*, ed. W. Voigt (Wiesbaden, 1974); Shaki, "Cosmogonical and Cosmological Teachings". In Madelung's opinion, this part of Shahrastānī's account does not go back to Abū ʿĪsā, but rather to an unknown informant ("Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq", p. 221 n.); however, the fact that it is also found in the *Dabistān* could be taken to suggest that Abū ʿĪsā was the source after all (cf. above, n. 165).

182 Altheim and Stiehl, "Mazdak and Porphyrius".

183 "Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq", p. 224.

184 Yarshater, "Mazdakism", pp. 1006 ff.; Madelung, *Religious Trends*, p. 10.

185 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. II, pp. 20 f. = 20; compare Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 394 (cited in G. Flügel, *Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften* (Leipzig, 1862), pp. 8 f.); Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part I, 1, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. IV (Paris, 1908), p. 227 = 226; G. Widengren, "Manichaeism", in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. III (2), p. 978. The Manichaeans also regarded the sun as a carrier of souls/light.

186 Reincarnation of the soul and periodic incarnation of the deity were ideas with a wide diffusion in the pre-Islamic Near East, and the concept of the moon as a carrier of souls is likely to have been widely diffused too. The idea was Indian and linked with reincarnation from the start (cf. Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad, I, 2, in F.M. Müller (tr.), *The Upaniṣads*, vol. I (Oxford, 1879; reprinted New York, 1962), p. 273 f.)

187 Rekaya's view that the Khurramīs originated within Islam is evidently also mistaken (M. Rekaya, "Le *Ḫurram-dīn* et les *ḫurramites* sous les ʿAbbāsides", *Studia Islamica*, LX (1984)).

to be a Zoroastrian heresy rather than a Gnostic creed inasmuch as it remained life-affirming: hatred of matter is not attested.

The second point that needs to be stressed is that Zarādusht's communism owed its existence to Zoroastrian thought, not to classical antecedents. The practice of looking for Greek antecedents is a venerable one inasmuch as Agathias was the first to do so: he rejected the theory, not because of its historical implausibility, but rather because the Persians could not in his view be credited with motives higher than concupiscence.[188] More recently, Altheim and Stiehl have located the origins of Mazdakite thought in neo-Platonism supposedly transmitted by Bud, a sixth-century Syrian whom the authors briskly redate to the third century and identify with Bundos, who supposedly picked up neo-Platonist ideas in Rome before moving on to the Murghāb in eastern Iran, where his ideas lay dormant for two centuries until they were picked up by Mazdak.[189] Klíma, on the other hand, played around with the idea of finding the roots of Zarādushtī communism in Carpocratianism, and though he more or less renounced this view in his second publication,[190] it has since been revived by Carratelli, according to whom Zarādusht picked up Carpocratian ideas during his sojourn as Bundos in the Roman empire.[191] That these suggestions are strained in the extreme should be obvious. Christensen saw a reference to Zarādusht of Fasā in a bilingual inscription (Phoenician and Greek) from Cyrenaica in which Zaradēs is mentioned along with Pythagoras as having commended communism in respect of property and wives;[192] and Klíma cautiously followed suit in his first book on the subject.[193] But later he discovered that the inscription had long been dismissed as a fake, as had another (in Greek alone) in which Zōroastrēs and Pythagoras appear along with Maedakēs and others as

188 Kavād legislated that women should be held in common "not, I'm sure, according to the argument of Plato and Socrates or for the hidden benefit in their proposal, but so that anyone could consort with whichever one he liked" (Cameron, "Agathias on the Sasanians", p. 128 = 129).

189 Altheim and Stiehl, "Mazdak und Porphyrius", pp. 76 ff. (cf. Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 124 f., on Bud). The whole article is a star example of what one might call philological *ḥurūfiyya*.

190 *Mazdak*, pp. 209 ff. (favoured by Yarshater, "Mazdakism", p. 1020); *idem*, *Beiträge*, p. 129, n. 20.

191 "Doctrines sociales", pp. 288 ff.

192 *L'Iran*, p. 339 n., with reference to W. Sherwood Fox, "Passages in Greek and Latin Literature relating to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism", *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute* (Bombay), XIV (1929), p. 118.

193 *Mazdak*, p. 211 f.

commenders of communal life.[194] Even if Zoroaster were to turn up as a commender of communism in a genuine inscription, he was so widely invoked as a figure of wisdom in the Graeco-Roman world that his appearance along with Pythagoras as a source of exotic ideas would tell us no more about intellectual exchanges between the Roman and the Persian empires than does the legend to the effect that Pythagoras and other Greek philosophers had learnt their wisdom from Persian Magi.[195] The Carpocratian hypothesis is quite unnecessary too. For one thing, the idea of joint property and/or women is so simple that it is unlikely only to have been dreamed up once, all other occurrences being the outcome of diffusion.[196] For another thing, Zarādushtī communism was intimately linked with Zoroastrian speculation on Āz, concupiscence, which is the principal force through which Ahriman (the evil god) gains power over mankind and which represents both excess and deprivation, fulfilment in the right measure being the remedy against it.[197] Communal goods and wives were meant to diminish the power of Āz, as a heretic affirms in the Zoroastrian books; and the only objection his orthodox adversary could mobilise against it was that communism turns the socio-political order upside down: logically, the communist argument was unimpeachable.[198] That the Zoroastrians should have had to visit the Roman empire in order to develop such ideas is implausible in the extreme.

Finally, the modern tendency to dismiss accounts of Zarādushtī communism, or more precisely that in respect of women, as exaggerated by hostile reporters, twisted by malicious slander and so forth, is mistaken.[199] Obviously there are embellishments in the sources, such as Kavād becoming a Mazdakite because he fancied an otherwise unavailable woman or Mazdak provoking his

194 *Idem*, *Beiträge*, pp. 122 ff.

195 Cf. F. Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York, 1956), p. 138; cf. also J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés* (Paris, 1938).

196 I hope to publish, jointly with John Hall, a volume of conference papers on the attestation of such ideas throughout the preindustrial world. [Ed.: The conference was held in Cambridge in 1992; the proceedings have not been published, but the article that follows in the present volume, "Zoroastrian Communism", is a revised version of a presentation given at this conference.]

197 Molé, "Ascétisme moral", pp. 162 ff.; *idem*, "Sectes", pp. 24 f.

198 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", pp. 291 ff.; Molé, "Sectes", pp. 24 f. (both citing the *Dēnkard*).

199 See for example A. Bausani, *The Persians* (London, 1971) p. 63; Frye, "The Political History of Iran under the Sasanians", in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. III (1), p. 150; H. Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* (London, 1986), p. 9; cf. also Duchesne-Guillemin, "Zoroastrian Religion", p. 892; Yarshater, "Mazdakism", pp. 999 f., 1013 (contrast p. 1020).

own fall by asking Kavād for Khusraw's mother;[200] this is as might be expected. But there is nothing embellished about the simple claim that communal access to women was part of the Zarādushtī creed. On this there is agreement in Greek, Syriac, Zoroastrian and Muslim sources; and we may take the sources on their word, for the Zarādushtīs are the only sectarians of the Middle East to whom a | communist vision of production and reproduction is imputed. 29

It is true, of course, that numerous Gnostic sects both before and after the appearance of Kavād and Mazdak were accused of promiscuity and that the Ismāʿīlīs of tenth-century Iraq and eleventh-century Baḥrayn are said to have been communists, the former in that they pooled both their women and their property on the eve of their ritual departure from non-Ismāʿīlī society and the latter in that they organised themselves along communist (or semi-communist) lines on a permanent basis.[201] But neither the Ismāʿīlīs nor their Gnostic predecessors, with the exception of the Carpocratians, are described as adherents of communist creeds. The Gnostics rejected the law as an instrument of salvation and frequently preached and/or engaged in the most outrageous behaviour they could think of by way of proving its irrelevance, with the result that they were routinely accused of promiscuity; and believers in messianic visions were apt to engage in the same kind of behaviour, partly because they shared the Gnostic view of the law and more particularly because ritual violation of deeply internalised rules is an effective way of burning bridges, or in other words of ensuring that the sectarians will have to stick together even though life on the margins may prove difficult and the messiah may fail to arrive.[202] But the antinomian behaviour rarely amounted to communism in either case, and there was no communism in the creeds themselves. The Ismāʿīlī leader in Iraq who persuaded his followers to pool their women and property under his control accomplished the bridge-burning and united his followers in abject dependence on himself by one and the same measure: his communism was instrumental. We do not know what sort of permanent order emerged from his innovations, but in Ismāʿīlī Baḥrayn, where the first (and

200 Cf. above, n. 57 (the unavailable woman); Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 59 (Khusraw's mother).

201 This topic will be dealt with by H. Halm in the volume referred to above, n. 196. In the meantime, see B. Lewis, *The Origins of Ismāʿīlism* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 96 ff.

202 The most famous modern example is Patricia Hearst, the American heiress who was kidnapped by a revolutionary group and signalled her conversion to the creed of her kidnappers by raiding a bank. This was obviously meant as an irrevocable act, partly in that she would be jailed and partly in that she would be deeply ashamed of her behaviour if she returned to normal society; but as the daughter of a newspaper magnate she only found it difficult, not impossible, to rebuild her bridges.

apparently non-communist) attempt at transition to millenarian conditions was a failure,[203] a new order eventually emerged which had communist features too. Here the communism was not instrumental, or not anymore, but it was still a local vision of messianic society which the propounders of the official creed had not envisaged. One can deny that the Ismāʿīlīs engaged in any communist activities whatever, be it in Iraq or Baḥrayn (and many scholars are suspicious of the reports), without greatly affecting our understanding of the Ismāʿīlī belief system.

But in the case of Zarādushtīs, communism is presented as an integral part of the belief system itself, and one cannot reject it as mere slander without thereby causing the very creed to vanish: take away the communist vision of production and reproduction and what is left? Either we must accept that the Zarādushtīs advocated joint control of women and property, as the sources say (since one can hardly reject the claim in respect of women and accept it in respect of land), or else we must admit that all we know about their beliefs is that they included pacifism and vegetarianism, everything else being misrepresentation. But misrepresentations of what? If we take the sources to be indulging in stereotypes, the only stereotypes available are those associated with Gnostic and millenarian sects, but these have the merit of being instantly recognisable and they do not fit: whether a particular group did or did not go in for orgiastic nights, incestuous couplings, obligatory pederasty/wine-drinking/murder or the like is usually impossible to determine, but the nature of the charge is unmistakable; and it is not the charge we encounter in connection with the Zarādushtīs. Mazdak preached *qatl al-anfus*, but the reference is not to ritual murder. Both he and Zarādusht may have rejected Zoroastrian law, given the Gnostic tendencies of their sect, but the sources say nothing about it. The Zarādushtīs believed in communal access to women and property, but their views are described as utopian, not antinomian. It was only among the later Khurramīs that *ibāḥat al-nisāʾ* assumed an antinomian colouring (*ibāḥat al-māl*, or communal access to land, having been largely or wholly forgotten in the meantime), just as it was only among them that millenarianism made its appearance. It is precisely because the Zarādushtīs were utopian rather than antinomian communists that scholars such as Klíma and Carratelli were fascinated by the Carpocratians, who likewise incorporated communism in their very creed: the parallel is real even though the genetic relationship between them is fictitious. It is for the same reason that the Zarādushtīs cannot be presented as victims of a stereo-

203 Cf. Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 213 = 196. Compare the analysis of the transitional stage in millenarian movements in K. Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 167 ff.

type; on the contrary they *engendered* one: all communist tendencies in the Muslim world were automatically branded as Mazdakite borrowings. And it is not of course problematic that the Zarādushtīs were less communist in practice than they were in principle, whereas it is the other way round with the Ismāʿīlīs. Neither Kavād nor Mazdak could hope to transform Sasanid Iran into a communist society in the sense of one in which resources were pooled under state control: the empire was too large and too complex for this to be possible, and too opposed to the attempt; however the vision was to be enacted, public ownership was not an option, and it does not in fact seem to have suggested itself to them.[204] But petty communities opting out of mainstream society in the name of a heretical creed were well placed to obtain a consensus on communist ways, even if these ways were not part of the heresy itself, and they were sufficiently small and homogeneous for public control of land and other resources to be viable. (There was no pooling of women once the transitional phase was over.)

In sum, sources of the most diverse kind are unanimous that the Zarādushtīs preached communal access to women and property, and many confirm that communal access to women continued to be preached | by the Khurramīs; 30
some of the observers were contemporaries of the Zarādushtīs, others of the Khurramīs, and they were not invariably hostile;[205] their claim is specific, not stereotypical, and what they say makes sense. On what grounds, then, do we purport to know better, a millennium and a half later? The modern scepticism does not arise from the nature of the documentation, but rather from a deep-seated conviction that communist solutions to the problems of production and reproduction simply *cannot* have been proposed in earnest in Sasanid Iran.[206] But this is a matter of evidence: a great many things that simply cannot happen do happen.[207] To reject the evidence on the basis of an *a priori* conviction is to

204 Some might wish to deny that the Zarādushtīs were communists on this ground; but this is to adopt a narrow definition of communism which does not, of course, disprove that the Zarādushtīs believed in communal access to the means of production and reproduction.

205 The author of the *Dabistān* was highly sympathetic, though unfortunately also late (cf. above, n. 165). Maqdisī was a good scholar who did field-work on the Khurramīs and presented their doctrines as seen by his informants (cf. above, n. 114). Narshakhī was horrified by al-Muqanna', but simply curious about the odd habits of the sectarians he had left behind (cf. above, n. 113).

206 This is clear from the fact that most of the scepticism is directed at the tenet on women, not that on land, for all that the tenet on women is far better attested. For the degree to which modern convictions shape the evidence rather than the other way round, see above, n. 38.

207 To historians of twentieth-century Europe writing a millennium and a half after the event,

engage in a circular argument; and the circular argument leads to the absurd proposition that the sources invented an intellectually coherent communist doctrine in order to distance themselves from a sect which, whatever else may be said about it, certainly was not communist. We may take it that Kavād and Mazdak endeavoured to transform Zoroastrian speculation on the elimination of Āz into practical politics, as Molé said;[208] the question is not whether they made the attempt, but rather why they made it.

III

Kavād's communism is generally, and undoubtedly correctly, interpreted as an anti-noble measure.[209] Joint access to women, promoted in the name of the Zoroastrian faith to which practically all Iranian nobles were committed, offered a beguilingly simple way of curtailing the power of the nobility for a ruler who had no army with which to defeat or despoliate it, his only troops being those furnished by the nobles themselves. In practice, of course, the attempt was a failure, and Kavād would scarcely have made it if he had not been a very young man at the time: he was twelve or fifteen when he was raised to the throne,[210] or at any rate a minor (some dissenting views notwithstanding),[211] meaning that he was only in his early twenties when the Persians put an end to his experiment. But unconventional though it was, the experiment clearly formed part of the protracted effort of the Sasanid emperors to modernise the Sasanid state. Modernity from a Sasanid point of view was incarnate in Byzantium, which was highly centralised, wealthy and sophisti-

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it will be obvious that the Nazi mass murder of Jews simply cannot have taken place. It does not fit the general picture of Europe (were Jews not highly assimilated?); we owe the claim to hostile sources (the victors); it is a patent exaggeration (who could believe it?); and both contemporary and slightly later sources reveal the existence of sober observers who denied it.

208 Cf. his "Ascétisme moral", p. 167.

209 Thus already Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 459.

210 Browne, "Niháya", p. 226 (twelve); Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, p. 66 (fifteen).

211 Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 1, p, 185; cf. Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, p. 885 = *Geschichte*, p. 139, and the comments of Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 34 f., thereto. Malalas claims that Kavād was 82 when he died (*Chronographia*, p. 471 = 274 (xviii, 68)), and Firdawsī has it that he was 80 (*Shāhnāma*, p. 2308), meaning that he was in his late thirties on his accession. This was accepted by Nöldeke (*Geschichte*, p. 143 n.) and Christensen (*Kawādh*, p. 93 n.); but it seems unlikely in view of the fact that he died in the field without there being any comments on his frailty.

cated by the standards of its Persian neighbours and which unwittingly induced the latter to reorganise themselves along similar lines by being almost constantly at war with them, the Sasanids being forced to imitate in order to keep up. Pērōz, Kavād's father, had incurred the enmity of the Zoroastrian clergy by attempting to introduce Roman baths,[212] which Kavād himself was also to sponsor in due course,[213] presumably in much the same spirit as that in which Atatürk sponsored European hats; and Kavād is said to have engaged in a whole string of Byzantinising measures in his first reign, reducing his kitchen expenses in imitation of Julian and promoting agriculture in imitation of the Romans in general (though he hardly needed the Greek example as far as agriculture is concerned).[214] He is also said to have engaged in ideological market research, ordering each religious community in his realm to present him with a treatise on its faith, presumably with a view to ascertaining which religion offered the most appropriate aegis under which to effect the reorganisation;[215] and though he abandoned both his heresy and his openness to foreign religions on his restoration, he stuck to his efforts at centralisation: it was he who initiated the cadastral survey which culminated in Khusraw's celebrated tax reform.[216] Khusraw was a Byzantiniser, too, for whether or not his tax reform was inspired by the Byzantine system,[217] he built an exact replica of Antioch in Iraq, populating it with Antiochene prisoners-of-war and proudly proclaiming it better than the original version;[218] and he took pleasure in upstaging the Greeks by offering hospitality to the pagan philosophers when Justinian closed their academy.[219] The Sasanid reaction to its Byzantine neighbour is an example of the well-known rule that military competition

212 Joshua, *Chronicle*, § 19.

213 Ibid., § 75 (after his conquest of Amida, where he tried a public bath).

214 Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 125. Promotion of agriculture was an activity in which Zoroastrian kings were traditionally expected to engage.

215 Ibid., part II, 1, p. 126.

216 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 960 = *Geschichte*, pp. 241 f.; Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, p. 72; Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, pp. 101 f.; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. J.H. Kramers (Leiden, 1938–1939), vol. II, pp. 303 f.; Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, pp. 179 f.

217 A Byzantine inspiration was proposed by Altheim and Stiehl, "Staatshaushalt der Sasaniden", *La nouvelle Clio*, V (1953), pp. 312 f.; *eidem*, *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike* (Frankfurt am Main, 1957), pp. 40 ff.; *eidem*, *Asiatischer Staat*, pp. 39 ff.; Pigulevskaja came to the same conclusion in an untranslated work, according to I. Hahn, "Sassanidische und Spätrömische Besteuerung", *Acta Antiqua* (Budapest), VII (1959), p. 149; Hahn argues against it.

218 Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 386 f.

219 Cameron, "Agathias on the Sasanians", 164 ff. = 165 ff., and the comments thereto.

between states of similar standing is apt to engender political, social and cultural change;[220] and it is doubtless in this context that Kavād's heresy should be seen.

As regards Mazdak's revolt, however, we can only guess at its causes. But before we start guessing we need to establish where and when it broke out, a question on which there is some contentious evidence.

The sources generally assume the Mazdakites to have rebelled in response to Kavād's adoption of the Zarādushtī heresy, that is in the 490s, and to have been suppressed by Khusraw after the latter's accession, that is in the 530s. If Kavād's heresy and Mazdak's revolt were separate phenomena, we are left without a date for the beginning of the revolt, but its end is not affected. It is, however, to the end of the revolt that the problematic evidence refers.

The problem is caused by Malalas. According to this source, an unnamed Persian emperor was angered by the appearance of "Manichaeans" in his realm and summoned them to a meeting at which he had all of them massacred, including their "bishop" Indazarar, whereupon he gave orders for their property to be confiscated and for all Manichaeans elsewhere in his realm to be burnt along with their books; Malalas had this information from a Persian convert to Christianity by the name of Timothy.[221] That the "Manichaeans" were Mazdakites is hardly open to doubt; their bishop Indarazar (*andarzgar*, adviser or teacher) may well have been Mazdak himself;[222] and though it is unlikely that
31 Zoroastrians should have wished to defile fire by | burning heretics and their books,[223] the claim that the Mazdakites were massacred at a meeting at court recurs in Arabic and Persian sources.[224] Malalas, however, places his account between the Antiochene earthquake of 528 and al-Mundhir's Syrian incursion of 529, meaning that the unnamed emperor is Kavād. By contrast, all Muslim sources credit both the meeting and the massacre to Khusraw, and almost all are agreed that Khusraw acted as king;[225] one version in al-Ṭabarī even says

220 See for example J.A. Hall, *Powers and Liberties* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 139 f.

221 *Chronographia*, p. 444 = 258 f. (xviii, 30).

222 Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 462 n.; Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 123 f.; Klíma, "Mazdak's Tod", p. 137.

223 As Klíma rightly notes (ibid., p. 137; cf. the Greek references to Zoroastrian prohibition of cremation cited in Cameron, op. cit., p. 99).

224 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, pp. 210 ff. = 209 ff.; Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, pp. 90 f.; Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, vol. I, pp. 778 f. = 373 f.; Christensen, "Two Versions", p. 325 (the Zoroastrian poem); cf. also above, n. 47, on the huge numbers of Mazdakites slaughtered in one day; Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 124 ff.

225 For the exceptions, see above, n. 52.

that he only took action when he was firmly established on the throne (*lammā ʾstaḥkama lahu ʾl-mulk*);[226] and Khusraw was certainly king when he tidied up the social and economic disorder left by the revolt.[227] The History of Karka de-Bet Selok, a contemporary Syriac source, implicitly places the suppression in the reign of Khusraw too,[228] while the Christian Arabic Chronicle of Siʾird does so explicitly;[229] and it is also Khusraw who disposes of Mazdak in the Zoroastrian books.[230] How can Khusraw have massacred Mazdakites after his accession if Kavād had already done so in 528–529?

Nöldeke's answer is that the Mazdakites were suppressed twice, first in 528–529 by Khusraw in his capacity of heir apparent, and next some time after 531 by Khusraw in his capacity as king.[231] As regards the second occasion, Nöldeke notes that Malalas has a strange story that Khusraw granted *tolerance* to the "Manichaeans" at the time of his accession: the nobles and priests reacted by plotting to depose him in favour of a brother of his, whereupon Khusraw executed all of them.[232] This, Nöldeke thought, could perhaps be seen as a confused reflection of the second occasion on which Mazdakites were suppressed.[233]

But Nöldeke's solution is not acceptable. In the first place, it is one and the same meeting plus massacre which is placed in 528–529 by Malalas and after 531 by the Islamic tradition. Khusraw can hardly have massacred the Mazdakites twice in precisely the same manner; and if Mazdak was killed in the reign of Kavād under the name of Indazarar, how did he come to be killed all over again by Khusraw after the latter's accession? In the second place, it does seem a bit strange that an edict of tolerance should be used as

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226 *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, p. 893 = *Geschichte*, pp. 153 f.; the alternative tradition (ibid., pp. 896 f. = 161) has him take action as soon as the crown was on his head.

227 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, p. 897 = *Geschichte*, pp. 163 f.; Eutychius, *Annales*, part I, p. 207; cf. also Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, p. 292; Christensen, *Kawādh*, pp. 122 f.

228 The heresy is here said to have existed now openly and now in secret until the time of Khusraw, presumably meaning that it was suppressed in his reign (cf. the reference given above, note 64).

229 Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 147 (with the confusion referred to above, n. 66).

230 Cf. above, n. 28.

231 *Geschichte*, pp. 462 ff. Nöldeke's reconstruction has been generally accepted in the sense that the end of the revolt is usually placed in 528–529, the second suppression being forgotten (cf. Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 124; *idem*, *L'Iran*, pp. 359 f.; Pigulevskaja, *Les villes*, p. 218; Altheim and Stiehl, "Mazdak and Porphyrius", p. 71; Neusner, *Jews in Babylonia*, vol. V, p. 75; Yarshater, "Mazdakism", pp. 1021 f.).

232 Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 471 = 274 (xviii, 69).

233 *Geschichte*, p. 466.

evidence of persecution. And in the third place, Klíma is right that 528–529 is a most implausible date in view of the fact that the Persians were then in the middle of a war with the Byzantines. It was not an opportune moment for the emperor to start killing thousands of Persians;[234] and if thousands of Persians *had* been killed in that year, we can be sure that the Byzantines would have heard of it. "It has been customary from ancient times both among the Romans and the Persians to maintain spies at public expense; these men are accustomed to go secretly among the enemy, in order that they may investigate accurately what is going on, and may then return and report to the rulers": thus Procopius, who was in the field with Belisarius at the very time when the massacre is supposed to have been perpetrated.[235] But the Byzantines heard nothing until a Persian convert got talking to Malalas some forty years after Khusraw's accession. Readers of Abū 'l-Baqā's recently published *Manāqib* may object that Nöldeke's reconstruction is confirmed by a passage in this text according to which "[Khusraw] killed Mazdak and his followers in the reign of his father and then again in his own reign, until he destroyed and exterminated them; but the truth (*wa'l-aṣaḥḥ*) is that it only happened under Kavād, for he was weak".[236] Nöldeke would however have been the first to see that this passage does not make sense. The manuscript does not have *qatala*, "he killed", but *qīla*, "it is said", which should be left unemended while two missing words should be supplied (*an ẓahara* or the like): "it is said [that] Mazdak and his followers [appeared] in the reign of his father and then again in his own reign until he destroyed and exterminated them, but the truth is that it only happened under Kavād, for he was weak". Abū 'l-Baqā' was puzzled by the dual appearance of the "Mazdakites" and reacted by placing it all in the reign of Kavād. That was one way of bridging the gap between Kavād's heresy and Mazdak's revolt, and it was quite possibly how Malalas' Persian informant had bridged it too.

Klíma, however, solves the problem by placing the bloodbath earlier rather than later, with reference to Theophanes. Theophanes tells much the same story as Malalas, but he adds that Kavād's third son, Phthasouarsan, had been brought up by the "Manichaeans" and that he made a bid for the throne with their help: the "Manichaeans" undertook to make Kavād abdicate in his favour, and he undertook to uphold their faith in return. This was why

234 "Mazdaks Tod", p. 138.

235 *Wars*, I, 21, 11.

236 Abū 'l-Baqā' Hibat Allāh, *Kitāb al-Manāqib al-mazyadiyya fī akhbār al-mulūk al-asadiyya*, ed. S.M. Darādika and M. 'A.-Q. Khuraysāt ('Ammān, 1984), vol. I, p. 121. On Kavād's reputation for weakness, see above, nn. 57, 119.

Kavād (who is explicitly named in this account) killed "thousands upon thousands of Manichaeans in a single day", along with their bishop Indazaros, etc. Theophanes places his account in 523–524, and this is the date that Klíma accepts.[237]

Theophanes' Phthasouarsan renders Padashkhwārshāh, ruler of Ṭabaristān, the ruler in question being Kāvūs, Kavād's eldest son, not his third.[238] Assuming that Kāvūs was born in Kavād's first reign, it is not impossible that he should have been tutored in the Zarādushtī faith for a while; but given that Kavād was only in his twenties when he was deposed, the instruction must have ceased when Kāvūs was a mere child, and it certainly cannot have continued right up to his bid for the throne, as Michael the Syrian's version of Theophanes' story would have it.[239] Kāvūs was the natural heir according to Procopius, but Kavād did not want him to succeed, and his second son Jāmāsp was disqualified because he had lost an eye, so Kavād's heart was set on Khusraw.[240] At some point after the accession of Justin I in 518, he began negotiating with the latter in the hope of making him adopt Khusraw | and thus guarantee his succession.[241] 32
These negotiations came to nothing, and in 527 war broke out again, so that when Kavād fell ill in 531 the best he could do was to write a succession document in Khusraw's favour, as Procopius and many later sources say he did,[242] or to crown Khusraw himself, as he did according to Malalas.[243] Kāvūs laid claim

237 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883–1885), vol. I, pp. 169 f. (A.M. 6016); Klíma, "Mazdaks Tod", pp. 139 f.

238 Christensen, *Kawādh*, p. 117; *idem*, *L'Iran*, p. 353; Procopius, *Wars*, I, 11, 3. Theophanes' claim that Kāvūs was Kavād's son by a daughter is thus implausible.

239 *Chronique*, ed. and tr. J.-B. Chabot (Paris, 1899–1910), vol. IV, p. 278 = vol. II, p. 190. In the Armenian version of Michael the Syrian and the Chronicle of 1234 it is *Khusraw* who is being tutored by "Manichaeans", presumably because Malalas had identified the son in question as the third rather than the first (M.K. Patkanian, "Essai d'une histoire de la dynastie des Sassanides", *Journal Asiatique*, VII (1866), p. 179; *Chronicon ad 1234*, vol. I, p. 193 = vol. II, pp. 152 f.). Hence Neusner's claim that Khusraw had been brought up in the Mazdakite religion (*Jews in Babylonia*, vol. V, p. 78).

240 *Wars*, I, 11, 3 ff.

241 Ibid., I, 11, 6 ff. Arcadius is said previously to have used a similar ploy to secure the succession of his son Theodosius, appointing Yazdgard his guardian (Cameron, "Agathias on the Sasanians," p. 124 = 125; cf. the discussion of both cases at p. 149).

242 *Wars*, I, 21, 19; Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, p. 146; Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. I, p. 186 (where the *waṣiyya* is understood as moral advice); Bal'amī, *Tarjuma*, p. 146 = 241; Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, pp. 2307 f.; Browne, "Nihāya", p. 227; Mīrkhwānd, *Rawḍa*, p. 777 = 272; cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 362 n.

243 *Chronographie*, p. 471 = 274 (XVIII, 68); compare Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, p. 69.

to the throne immediately after Kavād's death according to Procopius,[244] and staged a revolt at some point or other after Khusraw's accession according to Ibn Isfandiyār, claiming the throne with reference to his seniority and losing his life in the process.[245] Did he also conspire with Mazdakites some seven years before Kavād's death, thereby causing the Mazdakites (though not himself) to be massacred? This is what Klíma would have us believe, but his reconstruction carries no more conviction than does Nöldeke's.

In the first place, the Mazdakites can hardly have entertained hopes of making Kavād resign in favour of Kāvūs in 523–524, given that Kavād had by then revealed his willingness to go to extremes in order to ensure the succession of Khusraw. In the second place, and more importantly, Theophanes places the death of Kavād in 526. The interval between the massacre and Kavād's death is thus exactly the same in Theophanes as it is in Malalas: two to three years. Since Kavād did not die in 526, but rather in 531, the massacre should be moved from 523–524 to 528–529, the date at which Malalas puts it; or in other words, Theophanes' date is simply Malalas' date in a new guise, as Klíma himself saw even though he refused to accept it.[246] In the third place, what do we do about the fact that the non-Greek sources, be they Muslim, Zoroastrian or Christian, associate the massacre with Khusraw rather than Kavād? Klíma's answer is that Khusraw suppressed the Mazdakites in the reign of Kavād, acting as co-regent; but the sources on which be bases this conjecture are both exceedingly late and ahistorical, as he himself admits;[247] and if Khusraw was co-regent, how could the Mazdakites have believed that Kavād might resign in favour of Kāvūs? If morever the Mazdakites were suppressed in the reign of Kavād, why were they still around in the reign in Khusraw for the latter to grant them tolerance (according to Malalas) or to suppress them (according to the Islamic tradition), and why was it only in his reign that the chaos left by the rebellion was tidied up? Or are we to take it that *all* the sources are mistaken when they claim that something or other happened between Mazdakites and Khusraw in the latter's reign?

Let us start again. The massacre placed by Malalas and Theophanes in the reign of Kavād is identical with that placed by the Islamic tradition in the reign of Khusraw, and Khusraw is so firmly associated with Mazdakites in general and their end in particular that their suppression must in fact be credited to

244 *Wars*, I, 21, 20.

245 *Tārīkh*, vol. I, pp. 148 ff. = 93 f.

246 "Mazdaks Tod", p. 140.

247 *Loc. cit.*, with reference to Niẓām al-Mulk, Firdawsī and the sixteenth-century Zoroastrian poem (cf. above, n. 52).

him. Khusraw did not however act as co-regent with his father, nor did the latter abdicate in his favour, except in the limited sense that Khusraw may have been raised to the throne a couple of weeks before his father died.[248] This may well have been the starting point for the stories of co-regency and abdication with which some sources try to bridge the gap between Kavād's heresy and Khusraw's accession, but it does not allow for any action by Khusraw against the Mazdakites before the year in which he actually acceded. In other words, Khusraw must have suppressed them in his capacity as king. It follows that Malalas must have misplaced his account of this event. Either his Persian informant shared the view of Abū 'l-Baqā' or else he himself got things wrong, being in general apt to do so; the unnamed emperor was at all events Khusraw, not Kavād, and the date was some time after 531, not 528–529. (Theophanes merely followed suit; spelling out the emperor's name as Kavād and getting the latter's death date wrong in the process.)

If the Mazdakites were suppressed in Khusraw's reign, by far the most reasonable conjecture is that the revolt broke out on his accession. For one thing, it was the kind of revolt that would rapidly paralyse the workings of the state, yet Kavād was engaged in war against the Byzantines from 527 until his death: clearly, both money and men could be raised in the normal fashion; indeed, Byzantine overtures of peace were vigorously rejected.[249] For another thing, it is precisely when rulers are preoccupied with succession disputes, civil war or other forms of splits within the elite that peasant revolts tend to occur. Khusraw's succession was problematic, as has been seen, and it continued to be disputed after he had been enthroned. His eldest brother Kāvūs rebelled against him, while others plotted to overthrow him in favour of a son of Jāmāsp, the brother who was disqualified because he had lost an eye.[250] That the Mazdakite revolt should have broken out in the course of all this makes excellent sense.

Khusraw made peace with the Byzantines as soon as he succeeded,[251] and there is every reason to believe Malalas' assertion that he made peace with the Mazdakites too, issuing some sort of a decree of tolerance for the Zarādushtī faith in order to buy time.[252] That this action increased the opposition against

248 Cf. Taqizadeh, "Some Chronological Data", pp. 128 ff., where it is calculated (on the basis of Malalas himself and other sources) that Khusraw acceded on 18 August, 531, three weeks before Kavād's death in mid-September.

249 Procopius, *Wars*, I, 14, 1 ff.; 21, 1.

250 For Kāvūs, see above, nn. 244 f.; for the son of Jāmāsp, see Procopius, *Wars*, I, 23, 1 ff.

251 Ibid., I, 21, 23 ff.; 22, 1 ff.; Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 471 = 274 (xviii, 68). The so-called "endless peace" was ratified in 532.

252 It might be argued that Malalas' story of Khusraw granting tolerance to "Manichaeans"

him on the part of the clergy and nobility, as Malalas claims, is perfectly possible too. At all events, he crushed the revolt of Kāvūs and foiled the plot in favour of his nephew, executing all his brothers along with numerous grandees of the realm (though the nephew is supposed to have escaped);[253] and being now firmly ensconced on the throne (*fa-lammā ʾstaḥkama lahu ʾl-mulk*, as al-Ṭabarī says), he took on the Mazdakites: their revolt was suppressed and the chaos they had left tidied up. And once this was done, he took on the Byzantines too, resuming the war against them in 540.[254] By 540, then, it was all over. This fits
33 with a passage in the Chronicle of Siʾird, according to which | Zarādushtism was still rampant in the period between Mar Aba's return from Constantinople, which took place somewhere between 525 and 533, and his election as patriarch in either 536–537 or 540, five or eight years after Khusraw's accession:[255] in that period Mar Aba did his best to warn the people of the Nisibis area against the doctrine of Zarādusht which taught that "all physical pleasures are licit".[256] This is certainly a reference to the Zarādushtī heresy, not Zoroastrianism,[257] and it lends some support to the view that Mazdakism was only suppressed after Khusraw's accession.

Were the Mazdakites really in league with Kāvūs, as Theophanes asserts? It is not impossible. A princely contender for the throne may not be an obvious ally for a rural mob on the rampage, but both were rebels, and their revolts must have been enacted about the same time. It does however seem more likely that the complicity is a later fiction. Khusraw may have used the Mazdakite revolt to destroy his brother's credentials, accusing him of complicity with the dreaded rebels and harping on his real or invented upbringing in the Zarādushtī faith, or later generations may have inferred the complicity from the sheer fact that the revolts were contemporary. The latter seems more likely given that the

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reflects the same confusion between Zoroastrians and Zarādushtīs as that which prevails in the Chronicle of Siʾird, where the suppression of Zarādushtism is taken to mean that Khusraw must have established Manichaeism (above, n. 66). But this interpretation is awkward in view of Malalas' statement that Khusraw's decree of tolerance alienated the *magoi*: "Manichaeans" does seem to mean Mazdakites here, not Zoroastrians.

253 Procopius, *Wars*, I, 21, 20 and 23, 1 ff.; Scher, "Histoire nestorienne", part II, 1, pp. 146 f.

254 Procopius, *Wars*, II, 1, 1 ff.

255 Scher, op. cit, part II, 1, pp. 156 f., and notes 1 and 3 thereto. According to N. Pigulevskaya, "Mar Aba I, une page de l'histoire de la civilisation au VI^{e} siècle de l'ère nouvelle", *Mélanges d'Orientalisme offerts à Henri Massé* (Tehran, 1963), p. 330, he became patriarch in 540.

256 Scher, op. cit., part II, 1, p. 157 (*al-mubāḥ fīhi ʾl-lidhdhāt al-jismāniyya*).

257 There is no reference to licentiousness in Mar Aba's dispute with a Magian (ibid., part II, 1, pp. 164 ff.).

story fails to appear in Malalas, who wrote about 570, whereas it was known to Theophanes, who wrote about 800 and whose version of the Mazdakite bloodbath reflects other developments in the tradition: thus he is familiar with the idea of Kavād abdicating; and his statement that myriads of Mazdakites were killed "in one day" echoes that current in the Islamic tradition.[258]

As for where the revolt broke out, the *Dēnkard* implies that the rebellion affected all or most of Iran, but the passage is both vague and polemical.[259] Most of such exiguous evidence as we have points to Iraq. Mazdak may have come from Mādharāyā in lower Iraq; it was in the Nisibis area that Mar Aba encountered Zarādushtīs; and it was in Iraq (between al-Jāzir and al-Nahrawān) that myriads of Mazdakites were slaughtered in one day.[260] This is not to deny that the revolt may have spread to Persia itself: the later Khurramīs were concentrated in the mountains of western Persia,[261] and al-Iskāfī has it that Mazdak corrupted the population of Fars.[262] But Iraq would seem to have been the centre.

What then was the revolt about? Some might argue that this question is superflous: since peasants always had grounds for rebellion against landlords, agents of the state and other exploiters, their perennial grievances are less important for explanatory purposes than the particular conditions under which they manage to take action against their oppressors.[263] The facilitating factors in our case were the disarray of the central government on the one hand (as argued already) and the availability of a religious message with corresponding organisation on the other; and as regards the latter, it seems reasonable to infer that Kavād's sponsorship of the Zarādushtī heresy had given it a boost which assisted its diffusion. But one would nonetheless like to know more about the specific grievances involved.

To Marxists such as Pigulevskaja, Klíma and Nomani, the revolt was a response to the break-up of the old commune in which land was held in collective ownership, the break-up being effected by landlords representing the forces of feudalism;[264] to non-Marxists, the complete lack of evidence for the existence

258 Compare the references given above, n. 47.

259 Shaki, "Social Doctrine", p. 295 = 297.

260 Cf. above, nn. 47, 79, 256; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 465.

261 Cf. *EI*², s.v. "Khurramiyya".

262 *Lutf al-tadbīr*, pp. 130 f.

263 Cf. T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 115.

264 Klíma, *Mazdak*, p. 196; Pigulevskaja, *Les villes*, pp. 195, 209; F. Nomani, "Notes on the Origins and Development of Extra-Economic Obligations of Peasants in Iran, 300–1600 A.D.", *Iranian Studies*, IX (1976), pp. 122 f. For Engels' view that common ownership had been a

of such communes in Iran precludes acceptance of the thesis: that the Mazdakite movement reflects "the interest and hopes of those reduced to dependent status" is obvious enough, but there is no particular reason to believe that the dependence was recent.[265] There had been a famine under Pērōz, with which the government is supposed to have coped admirably;[266] but this was some time ago, and the later famine which Firdawsī and others describe as the trigger of Mazdak's revolt is probably fictitious.[267] The relationship between famines and revolts is in any case contentious. It is considerably more tempting to link Mazdak's rebellion with the cadastral survey initiated by Kavād. The fiscal reforms which followed the completion of this survey are described as having involved a change from payment of a proportion of the harvest, presumably in kind, to payment of fixed taxes in cash.[268] This is routinely acclaimed as the epitome of justice in the sources, and from the ruler's point of view, fixed taxes were of course highly desirable in that they made for a stable and predictable income. But it is precisely the kind of change that would threaten the peasants' livelihood, partly because fixed taxes removed the guarantee that *something* would be left for the peasants themselves to eat, and partly because taxes in cash forced the peasants to sell their crops, which in the vast majority of cases meant selling at the same time, with the result that prices would slump and that taxes could not be paid and/or that subsistence could not be ensured without ruinous loans from landlords or merchants.[269] There are no complaints about taxes in cash in the sources, be it because they were generally paid in cash already, or had come to be by Muslim times, or because our information is fragmentary in the extreme; but we are explicitly told that the shift to fixed taxes was a source of hardship. A story in al-Ṭabarī has it that when Khusraw solicited reactions to his proposed tax reforms, a scribe pointed out that he was putting a "perpetual tax on perishable things, such as a vine which may die, a grain which may dry up, a canal which may disappear or a spring or *qanāt* which may lose its water" (to which Khusraw reacted by having the scribe

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feature of all primitive societies from India to Iceland, see B. O'Leary, *The Asiatic Mode of Production* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 145 f.

265 Cf. Nomani, "Notes", p. 123.

266 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, pp. 837 f. = *Geschichte*, pp. 121 f.; cf. Anklesaria, *Zand Ākāsīh*, p. 276 = 277.

267 Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, p. 2303 = *Epic*, p. 317; Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, pp. 597 ff.; *Mujmil al-tawārikh*, p. 73.

268 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, pp. 960 ff. = *Geschichte*, pp. 242 ff.; Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, p. 72.

269 Cf. J.C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* (New Haven, 1976); P. Crone, *Pre-industrial Societies* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 23 f.

executed);[270] a tenth-century landowner from Nihāwand informs us that the Persians were horrified by the Sasanid shift from proportional to | fixed taxes 34
(which he attributes to Ardashīr, the founder of the dynasty);[271] and the anonymous *Nihāyal al-irab* adds that the Iraqis found Khusraw's tax régime so hard to bear and protested so much against it that proportional taxation (*muqāsama*) was eventually restored.[272] Here then we have a change of the requisite kind.

Kavād did not live to complete his cadastral survey, and the sources generally credit the fiscal reform to Khusraw, who is said to have enacted it *after* his suppression of the Mazdakite revolt. Modern scholars are accordingly more inclined to see the revolt as the cause or facilitating factor of the reform than the other way round, the argument being that the Mazdakite disturbances broke the power of the nobility, thereby enabling the crown to reorganise the state.[273] But this argument rests on the assumption that the Mazdakites rebelled in Kavād's heretical phase and continued to be on the rampage for another thirty-five years thereafter (orchestrated by Kavād himself in Gaube's view). If Kavād initiated his cadastral survey before Khusraw was confronted with Mazdakites, we have the choice between arguing that the survey formed part of the aetiology of the revolt or else that there was no connection between the two phenomena, and the latter does sound improbable. Mere fear of the reform could hardly have generated a major rebellion. It is however likely that the reform was instituted piecemeal as the cadastral survey went along, in which case it was started by Kavād and completed by Khusraw, not instituted by the latter alone; and Kavād undoubtedly started the survey with attendant reform in Iraq. Several sources, in fact, inform us that it was Kavād who instituted the new tax system in Iraq, or more precisely in the Sawād,[274] adding that he collected 150

270 *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, p. 961 = *Geschichte*, p. 243. Elsewhere, the scribe reproaches Khusraw for placing an eternal tax on perishable *humans*, suggesting that the problem was fixed provincial rates in conjunction with fluctuating populations (*Nihāyat al-irab*, reproduced in M. Grignaschi, "La riforma tributaria di Ḫosrō I e il feudalismo sassanide", in *La Persia nel medioevo* (Atti del convegno, Accademia nazionale dei lincei) (Rome, 1971), p. 135; compare Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, p. 183).

271 Ibid., p. 183.

272 Cited in Grignaschi, op. cit., p. 137. Grignaschi takes this passage to refer to the reintroduction of *muqāsama* in the time of the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mahdī (p. 119), but the formulation suggests a much earlier change.

273 Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 361; Klíma, *Mazdak*, pp. 281ff.; Pigulevskaja, *Les villes*, pp. 197, 211; Neusner, *Jews in Babylonia*, p. 75; Frye, *Ancient Iran*, pp. 324, 325.

274 Ibn Rusta, *Kitāb al-Aʿlāq al-nafīsa*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1892), p. 104; Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 39; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1866–1873), vol. III, p. 175, s.v. "al-Sawād"; Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, p. 180.

million *mithqāl*s of silver,[275] though others claim that it was Khusraw who collected this sum after Kavād had died;[276] and Kavād is also credited with the shift from *muqāsama* to fixed taxes in Fars.[277] He set up his tax office (*dīwān*) in Ḥulwān,[278] which he is commonly said to have built and in which the registers were kept until Umayyad times.[279] If the fiscal reform was initiated by Kavād himself in Iraq and western Persia, it is not surprising that the peasants of these regions rebelled under the leadership of a dissident priest as soon as an opportune moment presented itself in the form of a disputed succession. But Khusraw crushed the revolt and completed the reform, be it in a modified form or otherwise.

This would seem to be the best that one can do in the way of guesswork. Going beyond guesswork would be preferable, of course, but it is only in connection with Mazdak's revolt that the sources on Sasanid history afford us a glimpse of a real society at work, and they only show us enough to make us realise how little information was transmitted.

Postscript

General

For a survey of recent work on Mazdakism, see G. Gnoli, "Nuovi studi sul Mazdakismo", in *La Persia e Bisanzio* (Atti dei Convegni Lincei, 201) (Rome, 2004), pp. 439–446.

For a restatement of the view that the Mazdakites probably did not advocate sharing either women or wealth and that taking the sources at face value would be to "commit an anachronistic blunder by creating communism *avant la lettre*", see S. Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation* (London, 1994), pp. 125–127 (who is otherwise kind to the article). But the anachronism can at the most lie in the term "communist" (which many do not wish to use in pre-modern contexts), not in the beliefs themselves. The conviction that property and/or women should be shared and/or that they once had been and/or that they still were among some exotic peoples is extremely well attested in the Mediter-

275 Thus Ibn Khurradādhbih, *al-Masālik wa'l-mamālik*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1889), p. 14; Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, and Ibn Rusta (slightly different figure; cf. the preceding note).

276 Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 39; cf. pp. 101 f.

277 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣurat al-arḍ*, vol. II, pp. 303 f.

278 Qummī, *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, p. 180.

279 A.K.S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (London, 1953), p. 16 n., with reference to Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. II, p. 258; cf. *EI*[2], s.v. "Ḥulwān".

ranean in antiquity, not just in the form of the Gnostic Carpocratians whose communism Shaked himself seems to accept (cf. Shaked, *Dualism*, p. 126, n. 95). As a political ideal, moreover, it was not "sexual laxity" that such sharing represented (cf. Shaked, *Dualism*, p. 125), but rather a dream of overcoming inner strife (Greek *stasis*, Muslim *fitna*) by abolishing the household (see D. Dawson, *Cities of the Gods: Communist Utopias in Greek Thought* (Oxford, 1992)). It was precisely as a solution to strife that Zarādusht's ideas were intended.

Section II

For criticism of Christensen's ideas about Bundos, see now also S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman Near East* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 130 f. But it is hard to follow Lieu himself when he casually identifies a certain Masedes, of whom a Roman patrician is said to have been a disciple, as Mazdak; since the wife of this patrician was executed as a Manichaean under Justinian, the obvious inference is that Masedes was a Manichaean preacher in the Roman empire (op. cit., pp. 116 f.).

Section III

For another view of the chronology of the suppression of Mazdakism, see M. Whitby, "The Persian King at War", in E. Dąbrowa (ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East* (Krakow, 1994), p. 249.

See also the postscript to the next article.

CHAPTER 2

Zoroastrian Communism*

According to Xanthus of Lydia, who wrote in the fifth century B.C., the Magi considered it right to have intercourse with their mothers, daughters, and sisters and also to hold women in common.[1] The first half of this claim is perfectly correct: Xanthus is here referring to the Zoroastrian institution of close-kin marriage (*khwēdōdāh*), the existence of which is not (or no longer) in doubt.[2] But his belief that the Magi held women in common undoubtedly rests on a misunderstanding, possibly of easy divorce laws and more probably of the institution of wife lending.[3] In the fifth century A.D., however, we once more hear of Persians who deemed it right to have women in common; and this time the claim is less easy to brush aside. The Persians in question were heretics, not orthodox Zoroastrians or their priests; their heresy was to the effect that both land and women should be held in common, not just women (though the first attempt to implement it did apparently concern itself with women alone); and the heretics are described, not just by Greeks, let alone a single observer, but also by Syriac authors and the Persians themselves as preserved in Zoroastrian sources and the Islamic tradition. What then are we to make of the claim the second time round?[4]

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1 Xanthus, cited by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 3, 11, 1, in F. Jacoby, ed., *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, vol. 3, C2 (Leiden, 1958), no. 765 [pp. 757 f.].

2 Cf. B. Spooner, "Iranian Kinship and Marriage," *Iran*, 4 (1966), and the literature cited there.

3 Compare *Pauly's Realencyclopädie*, 2nd series, vol. 9A (2) (Stuttgart, 1967), s.v. "Xanthos (der Lyder)," where easy divorce laws are singled out. For the institution of wife lending, see below.

4 The most important works are Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari* (Leiden, 1879), a translation with invaluable comments; A. Christensen, *Le Regne de Kawādh I et le communisme mazdakite* (Copenhagen, 1925), summarized in *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*[2] (Copenhagen, 1944), ch. 7; O. Klíma, *Mazdak, Geschichte einer sozialen Bewegung im sassanidischen Persien* (Prague, 1957); id., *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mazdakismus* (Prague, 1977); E. Yarshater, "Mazdakism," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3, 2 (Cambridge, 1983); and the articles by Molé and Shaki cited below in note 20. The present study is based on P. Crone, "Kavād's Heresy and Mazdak's Revolt,"

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The History of the Sect

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We may start by tracing the history of the sect to which communist beliefs are imputed. It was founded by one Zarādusht (Zoroaster) son of Khrōsak or Khurrak, a contemporary of Mani (d. 276), who came from Fasā, a town in Fars, though he may have been active in Iraq. There is no reason to suspect him of being a doublet of the founder of Zoroastrianism, but his name should conceivably be understood as a title. If so, he was a Zoroastrian priest. No contemporary source refers to him, and his sect might easily have gone unrecorded.[5]

The sect catapulted to public notoriety, however, some two hundred years after Zarādusht's death, when the heresy was taken up by the Sasanian emperor Kavād, who came to the throne in 488. According to Joshua the Stylite, a contemporary Syriac chronicler, Kavād "revived the abominable Zoroastrian heresy known as that of Zarādusht which teaches that women should be in common and that every one should have intercourse with whom he pleases."[6] Greek historians make the same observation but without awareness that Kavād's ideas were religious. According to Procopius, who accompanied the Byzantine army to Persia in 527–531, Kavād "introduced innovations into [the] constitution, among which was a law which he promulgated providing that Persians should have communal intercourse with their women."[7] According to Agathias (d. 582), "it is said that he actually made a law according to which women were to be available to men in common. … These sins were being committed frequently, with full legality."[8] So indeed they seem to have been, for according to a late Christian-Arabic source, Kavād built shrines and inns where people could meet and engage in incontinence.[9] That he made women available to everyone (*abāḥa 'l-nisā'*) is also a commonplace in the Islamic tradition. No contemporary source, however, credits Kavād with communist policies in respect of property; and the Islamic tradition only does so because it conflates his policies with those of Mazdak, a communist rebel who was crushed by

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Iran, 29 (1991) [Ed.: included as article 1 in the present volume], to which the reader is referred for further details and proper documentation.

5 Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 24 and notes 63–75 thereto.

6 Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle*, W. Wright, ed. and tr. (Cambridge, 1882), § 20.

7 Procopius, *History of the Wars*, H.B. Dewing, ed. and tr., vol. 1 (London, 1914), 1: 5, 1ff.; cf. A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985), 8, 152ff.

8 A Cameron, ed. and tr., "Agathias on the Sassanians," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 23–24 (1969–1970), 128 f. through 129 f.

9 A. Scher, ed. and tr., "Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Séert)," part 1, 1, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, R. Graffin and F. Nau, eds., vol. 7 (Paris, 1911), 125.

Khusraw, Kavād's son and successor. The communist activities of Kavād and Mazdak are also conflated in the secondary literature but should undoubtedly be dissociated: The episodes were consecutive, not contemporary.[10] If Kavād was a communist in respect of property, his convictions were not reflected in his policies. But he was a pacifist, which did show in his policies, and also a vegetarian, which he kept a private matter.[11] His pacifism must have annoyed
449 the Iranian aristocracy, but contemporary and later sources | agree that it was his outrageous policies regarding women that led to his downfall. "The Persian grandees plotted in secret to slay Kavād, on account of his impure morals and perverse laws," Joshua the Stylite says;[12] Kavād's laws "by no means pleased the common people (*plēthos*)" who rose against him, according to Procopius;[13] "the leading men showed their displeasure openly, for they thought the disgrace unendurable," Agathias observes;[14] and numerous Muslim sources also state that his heresy led to his deposition.[15] Kavād was dethroned and imprisoned in 496 but managed to escape to the Hephtalites in Transoxania and to reconquer his kingdom with Hephtalite help in 498. By then he had sobered up. Restored to orthodoxy, he ruled with full aristocratic and ecclesiastical support from then onwards until his death in 531.

This might have been the end of the story. But about the time of Kavād's death the heresy was taken up for altogether different use by Mazdak, after whom it is generally known as Mazdakism. Neither Mazdak nor the massive revolt he raised is mentioned in Greek or Syriac sources, but he looms large in the Islamic and (to a less extent) Zoroastrian tradition, where he is identified as the son of one Bāmdād and as a Zoroastrian priest (*mōbad*). His place of origin is variously given, but he was almost certainly active in Iraq.[16] Mazdak is explicitly said to have owed his views to Zarādusht but, unlike Kavād, did not limit his communism to women. He argued that women and wealth are the fundamental sources of human discord and that concord would prevail if both were equally available to all. God (that is, Ahura Mazda, the good

10 Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 21 ff.

11 Ibid., 26 and notes 118–120 thereto.

12 *Chronicle*, § 23.

13 *Wars*, 1: 5, 1 f.

14 Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," 128 through 129.

15 See the references in Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," notes 9–14.

16 Ibid., 24, 27 and notes 74–80, 159 thereto. The sources which present him as a chief priest (ibid., note 160) do so on the basis of his supposed association with Kavād. For an attempt to deny his existence, see H. Gaube, "Mazdak: Historical Reality or Invention?," in *Mélanges offerts à Raoul Curiel*, Studia Iranica (1982).

deity) had created all men alike and placed the means of procreation and sustenance on earth "so that mankind might divide them equally among themselves";[17] women and property should be held in partnership like water, fire, and pasture;[18] nobody was allowed to monopolize them, sharing was a religious duty.[19] Sharing wives and property would diminish the power of *Āz*, concupiscence, a force through which Ahriman (the evil deity) worked on mankind. Āz thrived on both excess and deprivation, but fulfilment in the right measure was the remedy against it.[20] Like Kavād, Mazdak was a vegetarian; and
he, | too, wanted to eliminate war, hatred, and dispute, though in practice he 450
was responsible for massive bloodshed.[21] He raised a peasant revolt. His followers were the poor, base, weak, and ignoble plebs (*al-fuqarāʾ*, *al-sifla*, *al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, *al-ghawghāʾ*). They "would break into a man's home and take his dwelling, his wives and his property without him being able to prevent them";[22] "they killed those who did not follow them";[23] they claimed that "they were taking from the rich and giving to the poor, and that whoever had a surplus in respect of landed property, women or goods had no better right to it than anyone else."[24] Mazdak himself "would take the wife of one and hand her over to another, and likewise possessions, slaves, slavegirls and other things, such as landed property and real estate."[25] Huge numbers followed him: No less than 80,000 or 100,000 or even 150,000 were allegedly massacred in one day in just one place in Iraq, where the revolt was centered insofar as one can tell, though Fars is also said to have been involved. The revolt was suppressed by Khusraw I (531–571), who had completed the task by 540 at the latest.[26]

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17 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tarʾīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*, M.J. de Goeje and others, eds. (Leiden, 1879–1901, series 1), 885 f. [in Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 141].

18 Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal waʾl-niḥal*, W. Cureton, ed. (London, 1846), 193, in id., *Religionspartheien und Philosophen-Schulen*, Th. Haarbrücker, trans. (Halle, 1850), vol. 291.

19 For all this, see Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 24 and notes 81–87 thereto.

20 M. Molé, "Un ascétisme moral dans les livres pehlevis?," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 155 (1959), 162 ff.; id., "Le problème des sectes zoroastriennes dans les livres pehlevis," *Oriens*, 23–24 (1960–1961), 24 f.; M. Shaki, "The Social Doctrine of Mazdak in the Light of Middle Persian Evidence," *Archiv Orientální*, 46 (1978), 291 ff.

21 Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 26 and notes 122–128 thereto.

22 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, 886, in Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 142.

23 Al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-badʾ waʾl-taʾrīkh*, Cl. Huart, ed. and tr. (Paris, 1899–1919), vol. 3, 168 [171].

24 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, 886, in Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 141.

25 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fīʾl-taʾrīkh*, C.J. Tornberg, ed. (Leiden, 1851–1876), vol. 1, 297.

26 Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 23, 30–33 and note 47.

Thereafter, the Zarādushtīs seem to have disappeared from Iraq, but they reappear from about 740 onwards in Iran under the label of Khurramīs or Khurramdīnīs (adherents of the joyous religion). By then they had changed somewhat. Typically, their religion was now a mishmash of Zoroastrian, Gnostic, and other ideas, to which Islamic notions were being added; but the old Zarādushtī conception remained. Thus, they were still pacifists, except in times of revolt, and vegetarians too: In their view, no living creature should be killed, and some of them even deemed it unlawful to cause injury to plants.[27] They do not seem to have clamoured for communal property any more; but almost all stuck to the idea of communal access to women (*ibāḥat al-nisāʾ*), if only in an emblematic vein. "Some of them believe in communal access to women, provided that the women agree, and in free access to everything in which the self takes pleasure and to which nature inclines, as long as nobody is harmed thereby," al-Maqdisī observes with reference to tenth-century Khurramīs in western Iran.[28] "They say that a woman is like a flower, no matter who smells it, nothing is detracted from it," Narshakhī explains with reference to Khurramīs
451 of the same period in Transoxania;[29] and twelfth-century Khur|ramīs in Azerbayjan claimed that women are the water of the house which every thirsty man is allowed to drink.[30] There may still have been Khurramīs in Iran in the seventeenth century.[31]

Are the Sources to Be Trusted?

Many scholars find it hard to accept the claim that the Zarādushtīs preached communal access to women. In their view the sectarians are more likely just to have tampered with Zoroastrian marriage law, for example by rejecting endogamy, prohibiting polygamy, calling for the abolition of harems, making it cheaper to marry, relaxing the rules of levirate marriages, or abolishing the institution of substitute heirs; but the sectarians' horrified opponents, who

27 Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. 4, 31 [28]; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, R. Tajaddud, ed. (Tehran, 1971), 406; Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 3, 1228, in id., *The Reign of Muʿtasim*, E. Marin, tr. (New Haven, 1951), 52; W. Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, N.Y., 1988), 10.

28 Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. 4, 31 [29].

29 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, C. Schefer, ed. (Paris, 1892), 73, in id., *The History of Bukhara*, R.N. Frye, tr. (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), 75.

30 Madelung, *Religious Trends*, 10.

31 Thus, the Parsee *Dabistān-i madhāhib* (Calcutta, 1809), vol. 1, 166 f., in *The Dabistán, or School of Manners*, D. Shea and A. Troyer, trans. (Paris, 1843), vol. 1, 378.

were given to twisting and exaggerating what they heard, took these demands to mean that women should be shared: The alleged doctrine of communal access to women is a polemical fiction.[32]

One might have been inclined to accept this argument if the sources had occasionally mentioned some of the marriage reforms suggested by modern scholars and added the sharing of women by way of rhetorical flourish; but they do not. Instead, they uniformly credit the Zarādushtīs with a conviction that women should be shared, no more and no less. The sources make this claim with reference to Zarādusht in the third century, to Kavād in the fifth, to Mazdak in the sixth, and to Khurramīs from the eighth to the twelfth century, if not the seventeenth. They say this in Syriac, Greek, Arabic, Pahlavi, and Persian, from the viewpoint of Christians, Muslims, and Zoroastrians, indeed from that of the Zarādushtīs themselves, if only in the form of Khurramīs. Several sources are contemporary with the sectarians they describe; a few are neutral or even sympathetic; and their statements are rarely formulaic: Kavād revived the abominable heresy of Zarādusht which teaches that women should be in common; Mazdak held that women and property should be held in partnership like water, fire, and pasture; women are like flowers that one can go on smelling without detracting from them, or like water which every thirsty man may drink. These and other statements hardly sound like polemical exaggerations of demands for Zoroastrian marriage reforms. Nor do they sound like the stereotyped accusations of promiscuity leveled at Gnostics.[33] In short, those who accuse the sources of exaggeration simply cannot believe that a doctrine of communal access to women can have existed, however good the evidence. They typically voice their skepticism in works of a general | nature; 452
those who have worked closely with the sources rarely find it difficult to believe them.[34]

If one denies that the Zarādushtīs were communists in respect of women, one must also deny that they were communists in respect of land, for their

32 Thus Yarshater, "Mazdakism," 999 f., cf. 1013; similarly, if more briefly, A. Bausani, *The Persians* (London, 1971), 63; R.N. Frye, "The Political History of Iran under the Sasanians," *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3, 1 (Cambridge, 1983), 150; H. Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* (London, 1986), 9.

33 This point is discussed at length in Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 29 f.

34 Cf. Nöldeke, Christensen, Klíma (above, note 4), Molé, Shaki (above, note 20), and myself. Only Yarshater is sceptical, but not consistently, for though he begins by toning down the Mazdakite doctrine concerning women (above, note 32), he later accepts that the Carpocratians and Mazdakites "offered the same argument for the community of property and women" ("Mazdakism," 1020).

views on women and land obviously went together. As far as the Zarādushtīs were concerned, women were simply a kind of property, though certainly the most important kind as far as sharing was concerned. Kavād and the later Khurramīs were communists in respect of women alone, while Mazdak (presumably following Zarādusht) gave equal weight to both, but communism in respect of property alone is not attested for this sect. Yet one scholar asserts that Kavād only engaged in redistribution of noble property and that there is no evidence that he tried to enforce communal access to women![35] Others accept that the Mazdakites were communists in respect of land while rejecting their views on women as polemical exaggeration, but this is equally untenable. Either the Mazdakites were communists in respect of land and women alike, with special emphasis on women; or else they were not communists at all. But if they were not communists at all, what is left of their creed? The result would be sectarians who argued that women and property were the chief causes of human strife and proposed a solution to this problem which everybody took to be communist but of which the only thing we know for certain is that communist it was not. It does not sound persuasive.

Given that the idea of holding women in common has figured in Western utopian thought from Plato to the 1960s, one may well ask why the Persians should be judged incapable of entertaining the idea. In fact they clearly were not, for the idea suggested itself easily enough to the opponents of the Zarādushtīs, even if we deem the latter innocent of it. However, communism in respect of women sounds like a doctrine of unbridled licentiousness which it would be both silly and offensive to attribute to others, and this is presumably why so many prefer to explain it away. But their reaction is mistaken. It is perfectly true that the sources present Zarādushtī communism as a hedonistic creed. Agathius opined that Kavād took it up "not … according to the argument of Plato or Socrates, or for the hidden benefit in their proposal, but so that anyone could consort with whichever one he liked."[36] Al-Bīrūnī held
453 that Kavād took it up because he fancied an otherwise unavailable woman.[37] | Joshua thought that the doctrine was impure, abominable, and perverse; and others said that it was pure licentiousness.[38] But all this is merely to say that

35 S.W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*[3], vol. 3 (New York, 1957), 56 (another general work).

36 Cameron, "Agathias on the Sasanians," 128 [129].

37 Al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiya 'an al-qurūn al-khāliya*, C.E. Sachau, ed. (Leipzig, 1923), 209, in id., *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, C.E. Sachau, tr. (London, 1879), 192.

38 For Joshua, see the references given above, notes 6, 12; for Zarādusht's doctrine as a tenet that "all physical pleasures are licit," see Scher, "Histoire nestorienne," part 2, 1, 157.

the sources misidentify the spirit in which the doctrine was propounded, not that they falsify the doctrine itself. It is only the alleged spirit that we must discount. Communism in respect of women evidently is not a doctrine of unbridled licentiousness, any more than communism in respect of property is one of unbridled greed. It should be obvious that Zarādusht conceived his doctrine in an attempt to devise a better way of organizing human society, exactly as did Plato, while Kavād took it up for its "hidden benefit," whatever Agathias might claim. In defence of the sources it must be said that the Zarādushtīs laid themselves open to charges of hedonism, at least in their Khurramī form, in that they endorsed the enjoyment of "everything in which the self takes pleasure, and to which nature inclines, as long as nobody is harmed thereby,"[39] including wine, music, and flowers, real or metaphorical, which is an attitude so contrary to the ascetic currents of the period that some scholars prefer to turn the evidence upside down so as to present the Khurramīs as ascetics.[40] But it was apparently their attitude to the good things of life which caused them to be known as Khurramīs, the adherents of the joyous religion; and the slogan "make love, not war" would not have been an altogether inappropriate summary of their views, though unlike the flower-power children of the nineteen-sixties, the Khurramīs do not come across as frivolous. But even the half-baked doctrines of the sixties were meant as solutions to a strife-ridden world, and this is certainly true of Zarādushtism, which was never a simple license to mindless pleasure. Nat-

39 Cf. Maqdisī, *Bad'*, note 28.

40 Thus, G. Pugliese Carratelli, "Les doctrines sociales de Bundos et de Mazdak," *Acta Iranica*, 2 (1974), 286 f., takes the fact that the Zarādushtīs preached equal access to the good things of life to mean that they preached abstention from such things in an effort to kill desire; J. Duchesne-Guillemin argues much the same (*La religion de l'Iran ancien* [Paris, 1962], 286; id., "Zoroastrian Religion," in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3, 2, 892). Others merely credit the Khurramīs with ascetic tendencies: thus, Christensen, *Kawādh*, 102 f.; cf. also id., *L'Iran*, 342 f.; Yarshater, "Mazdakism," 1013 f.; Madelung, *Religious Trends*, 5; M. Shaki, "The Cosmogonical and Cosmological Teachings of Mazdak," *Acta Iranica*, 11 (Papers in Honour of Mary Boyce) (1985), 543. But there is much evidence against the more modest proposition too, and none in its favour. The Shahrastānī passage adduced by Christensen does not refer to mortification of the self but to killing in the literal sense of the word (*cf*. Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 27, and notes 171–173 thereto; cf. also Qur'ān, 5:35); neither the vegetarianism nor the pacifism of the Zarādushtīs was meant in an ascetic vein (the taking of lives was forbidden because life was good, not because one should seek to escape from it); and the sixteenth-century assertion that Mazdak "wore woolen clothing and engaged in constant devotion" is obviously a mere embellishment (Mīrkhwānd, *Tārīkh-i rawḍat al-ṣafā*, vol. 1 [Tehran, 1338], 774, in id., *The Rauzat-us-safa*, E. Rehatsek, tr., part 1, vol. 2 [London, 1892], 369).

urally the enemies of the Zarādushtīs were convinced that so radical a heresy must have been propounded in the basest of spirits, but this is merely to say that they were shocked. This they had every right to be, for the doctrine was indeed radical.

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How Was the Communist Ideal to Be Practised?

We do not know how Zarādusht envisaged the implementation of his ideas, but to his followers the solution lay in redistribution of women and property on the one hand and communal access to both on the other. His followers did not try to abolish pair bonding. Kavād is said to have ruled that children born of extramarital unions were to be affiliated to the woman's husband.[41] If this is true (the source is late), Kavād clearly thought that marriage would continue, along with hereditary transmission of property and marital responsibility for the upbringing of children. Marriage certainly did continue among the later Khurramīs. Some sources (also late) say that Mazdak held children to be common property on a par with women.[42] He may have regarded children in this way, but he did not attack the nuclear family in practice. Adults were not assigned to separate halls of men and women between whom mating (indiscriminate or controlled) was allowed but permanent pair bonding forbidden; children were not placed in halls of children for collective rearing as they were to be in the future *kibbutzim*. What he did rule was that nobody was allowed to have more wives than others or to monopolize the wife he had. Of Kavād we are only told that he was against monopolization. He wanted all men to have free access to all women, to which end he established places where they could meet, but he did not apparently engage in redistribution. Mazdak, however, "would take the wife of one and hand her over to another"; his followers "would break into a man's home and take his … wives," arguing that "whoever had a surplus in respect of … women had no better right to it than anyone else."[43] At the same time Mazdak is said to have sanctioned wife lending.[44] Even among the twelfth-century Khurramīs of Azerbayjan, the vision is clear enough. Because all women were common property, nobody could have more than one at a time; and because they were common property, women were like water of which every thirsty

41 Scher, "Histoire nestorienne," part 2, 1, 125.

42 B.T. Anklesaria, ed. and tr., *Zand Ākāsīh* (Bombay, 1956), 276 [277]; Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, G. Le Strange and R.A. Nicholson, eds. (London, 1921), 84.

43 See the references given above in notes 22, 24, 25.

44 Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 25 and notes 97–98 thereto.

man could drink.[45] To outsiders this combination of monogamy and promiscuity must have seemed insane, but in communist terms it made perfect sense.

The Zarādushtīs did not abolish private property, either. They made no attempt to institute state ownership of land, which is as might be expected given their pre-modern setting; nor did they pool their property, and this makes sense too. For it is followers of millenarian movements who will pool their resources typically on the eve of the great transformation (as in the Acts of the Apostles, 2:44 f.); and the Zarādushtīs were not millenarians. In fact, Mazdak's followers must be the only peasant rebels in pre-modern history to have been communists without being millenarians too. At all events, what | they aimed at 455
was redistribution and denial of exclusive rights. Mazdak "ordered that people should be equal in respect of property."[46] He would redistribute "possessions, slaves, slavegirls, and other things, such as landed property and real estate."[47] His followers "would break into a man's home and take his dwelling … and his property," claiming that "they were taking from the rich and giving to the poor, and that whoever had a surplus in respect of landed property … or goods had no better right to it than anyone else."[48] They said that "nobody has the right to more property or wives than others, so that he who is able to take people's possessions or obtain their wives by stealth, deceit, trickery, or blandishment is allowed and free to do so; the property which some people have in excess of others is forbidden to them until it has been distributed equally among mankind."[49] Put in modern legal terminology, the Zarādushtīs abolished private ownership but accepted private possession. Whereas ownership is a sacred right, possession is contingent. I may not possess what I own, for others may have stolen it from me; I can demand possession of a thing on the grounds that I own it, but I cannot claim ownership on the grounds that I possess it. Possession does not in itself establish exclusive rights. The Zarādushtīs said that as far as sacred ownership was concerned, women and wealth were communal property: Everybody had as much right to them as everybody else, meaning that they had to be distributed equally. But mere possession continued to be private. Possession without the backing of ownership did not, however, establish exclusive rights; so everybody was free to avail himself of what his neighbour did not seem to need. The doctrine was beautifully coherent.

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45 Madelung, *Religious Trends*, 10.

46 Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, M.Th. Houtsma, ed. (Leiden, 1883), vol. 1, 186; cf. Tabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, ser. 1, 893, in Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 154.

47 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ʾl-taʾrīkh*, note 25.

48 Cf. the references given above, notes 22, 24.

49 Al-Malaṭī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh*, S. Dedering, ed. (Istanbul, 1937), 72 f.

Does It Qualify as Communism?

Some might argue that Zarādushtism is too redistributionist to qualify as communism, but this is scarcely correct. It seems reasonable to identify as communism any doctrine which advocates collectivization of rights normally vested in individuals or families, and a doctrine to the effect that the means of production and reproduction should be held in common certainly falls squarely within that definition. How the doctrine proposes to effect the common ownership is another question which the generic definition should exclude.

Many scholars balk at classifying pre-modern communism as communist without circumlocution or quotation marks because real communism in their view requires state ownership of the means of production or at least state regulation of the productive process. Though his terminology differed, this was Durkheim's position. He denied that modern communism (which he called socialism) belonged in the same genus as pre-modern communism (which he called communism), on the grounds that modern communism/socialism
456 seeks | to regulate production by tying it to the state, whereas pre-modern communism only affects consumption and seeks to banish wealth rather than to "socialize" it, seeing wealth as a source of moral corruption.[50] But Durkheim's claim that pre-modern communism never concerned itself with production is wrong, as the Zarādushtī example shows; and though he is right that the fundamental difference between modern and pre-modern communism lies in the different relationships which they envisage between state and production, this merely goes to show that they are communist creeds tailored to different types of states, not that they (or for that matter the states) belong to fundamentally different genera. Since pre-modern states did not take an interest in production as such, it stands to reason that pre-modern communism should have been prescribed for rulers who did not produce (as in Plato and his many imitators) or for producers whose economic organization was not perceived as relevant to the rulers (as in Mazdakism). By contrast, all modern states concern themselves intensely with production; and all modern political programmes envisage "a more or less complete connection of all economic functions or of certain of them … with the direction and knowing organs of society," not just communism/socialism as Durkheim maintains.[51] What singles out communism/socialism from other modern programmes is its

50 E. Durkheim, *Socialism and Saint-Simon*, C. Sattler, tr., and A.W. Gouldner, ed. (London, 1959), ch. 2.

51 Durkheim, *Socialism*, 21.

recommendation of collectivization. This must clearly be accepted as the diagnostic feature of the genus, though Durkheim refused to admit it.[52]

Some might put the two objections together and argue that redistribution along equitable lines is impossible to achieve without state ownership and that accordingly doctrines which sponsor the one without the other can only be classified as proto-communist at best. But equitable distribution cannot be achieved with state ownership either, and it would be absurd to include practicability in the definition of communism. One might as well build it into that of millenarianism and other utopian ideas. In general, the manifestations of communism with which we happen to be familiar have no greater claim to archetypal status than the rest. Pre-modern communism invariably looks more naïve than its modern counterpart, and so no doubt it was; but cities were cities before the invention of skyscrapers; smoke signals were a means of long-distance communication even though they were not faxes; and communism was communist long before the appearance of Marx.

What Was It About?

Kavād's communism has long been interpreted as an anti-noble measure, and this is undoubtedly correct. Sasanian history is dominated by royal attempts to centralize power, among other things in response to competition with Byzantium, with which the Sasanians were almost constantly at war.[53] Kavād, who | 457
depended on the nobility for military and political services without which his empire would have collapsed, was not in a position forcibly to oust or shear it of its wealth; and he made no attempt to confiscate aristocratic lands or to abolish their hereditary transmission, as has been seen. But communal access to women, promoted in the name of the Zoroastrian faith to which practically all Iranian nobles were committed, offered a seemingly simple way of curtailing the power of the nobility in that it undermined the exclusivity of their lineages, which were sealed off from the rest of the community by endogamous or even incestuous marriages.[54] Communal access to women destroyed the mystique of noble blood, thus placing a question mark over the political entitlements with which such blood had been associated. What the enemies of the Zarādushtīs found particularly objectionable about *ibāḥat al-nisā'* was precisely

52 As he sees it, it has contributed most to the confusion (Durkheim, *Socialism*, 35).

53 Cf. Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 50 and notes 212–220 thereto.

54 Cf. above, note 2. Modern Zoroastrians explain away the institution of close-kin marriage by blaming it on Mazdak! (Christensen, *L'Iran*, 325.)

that it obliterated hereditary ranking. It worked by "obscuring the descent of every individual," a Zoroastrian book complains.[55] "Genealogies were mixed," "base people of all sorts mixed with people of noble blood," we are told with reference to Mazdak's revolt.[56] "If people have women and property in common, how can they know their children and establish their genealogies?" a Zoroastrian priest is said to have asked.[57] Besides, a peasant could hardly feel the proper awe and respect for an aristocrat if he had slept with his wife. But simple though the solution looked in theory, it unsurprisingly failed to work in practice; and Kavād would hardly have played around with so outrageous an idea if he had not been a very young man at the time: He was twelve or fifteen when he was raised to the throne or, at any rate, a minor (some dissenting voices notwithstanding) and thus in his early twenties when he was dethroned for his experiment.[58] But unconventional though it was, the experiment undoubtedly formed part of the protracted efforts of the Sasanian emperors to centralize the Sasanian state.

This brings us to Mazdak and his peasant revolt. We may begin by noting that the succession to Kavād was disputed. When Khusraw acceded, his older brother, Kāvūs, laid claim to the throne and staged a revolt while others plotted to overthrow him in favour of one of his nephews.[59] Kavād's death was thus followed by a disarray at the centre which made it possible for peasants to take action. Given that peasants always have reasons to rebel, it might be argued that this explanation suffices, but it is clear that additional factors were
458 at work. Modern communists find them in the supposed erosion | of village communalism by the forces of feudalism,[60] but we do not know anything about village communalism in ancient Iran. Thus, this explanation rests on an a priori conviction that it must have existed in conjunction with Mazdak's statement that people should be partners in land and women as they are in water, fire, and

55 Shaki, "Social Doctrine," 291 f.; Molé, "Sectes," 24 f. (both citing the *Dēnkard*).

56 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. 2, 168 [171]; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, ser. 1, 893, in Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 154.

57 Al-Tha'ālibī, *Ghurar akhbār mulūk al-furs wa-siyarihim*, H. Zotenberg, ed. and tr. (Paris, 1900), 602; cf. Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, M. Qazwīnī and M. Mudarrisī Chahārdahī, eds. (Tehran, 1956), 203, in id., *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, H. Darke, tr. (London, 1960), 202 f.

58 See the references in Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," notes 210–211.

59 Cf. Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 32 and notes 244–245, 250 thereto.

60 Klíma, *Mazdak*, 196; N. Pigulevskaya, *Les villes de l'état iranien aux époques parthe et sassanide* (Paris, 1963), 195, 209; F. Nomani, "Notes on the Origins and Development of Extra-Economic Obligations of Peasants in Iran, 300–1600 A.D.," *Iranian Studies*, 9 (1976), 122 f. Compare B. O'Leary, *The Asiatic Mode of Production* (Oxford, 1989), 145 f.

pasture.[61] This does indeed sound like an invocation of village practices, but the fact that Mazdak illustrated his ideas with reference to such practices does not of course mean that he was motivated by threats to them: The pre-modern communists who illustrated their ideas with reference to the communality of sunshine did not thereby mean to imply that sunshine was in danger of privatization.[62]

It seems more likely that Mazdak's revolt was triggered by a fiscal reform. Kavād had begun a cadastral survey with an attendant tax reform which Khusraw was to complete. The reform involved a change from payment of a proportion of the harvest, presumably in kind, to payment of fixed taxes in cash; and this was the kind of change that could threaten the peasants' livelihood, partly because fixed taxes removed the guarantee that something would be left for the peasants themselves to eat and partly because taxes in cash forced the peasants to sell their crop, which they usually had to do immediately after the harvest because they lacked reserves. The sale of their crops would flood the market, causing prices to fall, so that they would find themselves unable to pay their taxes or to feed their families without ruinous loans from landlords or merchants. There are no complaints about taxes in cash in the sources, possibly because they are fragmentary in the extreme; but several passages tell us that the transition to fixed taxes was a source of hardship. The fiscal reform thus gives us a plausible cause of the revolt. The only problem is that most sources credit Kavād with merely initiating the cadastral survey, saying that Khusraw completed it and then instituted the reform. This would make the revolt come first. But it is likely that the reform was instituted piecemeal as the cadastral survey proceeded. In other words, both the survey and the reform were probably initiated by Kavād, who would undoubtedly have started work in Iraq; and several sources do in fact say that Kavād instituted the new tax system in Iraq, while others credit him with its initiation in Fars. If this is accepted, it is not surprising that the peasants of these regions rebelled under the leadership of a dissident priest as soon as an opportune moment presented itself in the form of a disputed succession.[63] Kavād's earlier attack on the nobility presumably also played a role, partly because his sponsorship of Zarādushtism must have assisted the diffusion of | the heresy and partly because it is likely to have weak- 459
ened aristocratic control of the peasants. That the revolt was a failure conforms to expectation.

61 See the reference given above, note 18.

62 Thus, for example, the Carpocratian treatise, below, note 79.

63 For all this, see Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 30–34.

How Was the Heresy Born?

Zarādushtī communism was of the anarchic rather than the regimented type (represented above all by Plato);[64] and the vision has a strong primitivist ring to it. As regards women, the Zarādushtīs hoped to achieve the organization imputed by Herodotus to the Agathyrsoi, who "have their women in common so that all may be brothers and, as members of a single family, be able to live together without jealousy and hatred."[65] As regards property, the Zarādushtīs envisaged society along the lines of Trogus' aboriginal Italians, among whom "all things belonged to all in common and undivided, as if all men had one patrimony."[66] But was there a primitivist streak in Zoroastrianism? The Iranians are not known to have idealized barbarians or routinely to have credited them with communist organization after the fashion of the Greeks.[67] Nor is it possible to demonstrate that they had a myth of primordial freedom and equality: The first king on earth is a culture hero whose institution of kingship and other appurtenances of civilization is applauded without any indication that inequality and oppression were the other side of the coin.[68] Given the fragmentary nature of the sources, however, it cannot be inferred that no such myth existed; and it is tempting to see a reference to one in the Zarādushtī claim that God had created all men alike and allowed the sons of Adam to inherit the earth equally.[69] This is admittedly formulated in Islamic language, but the fact that golden age myths postulating aboriginal absence of private property and pair bonding crop up on both the Greek and the Indian sides of the fence suggests that such ideas were part of a common Indo-European legacy.[70] It surely cannot be acciden-

64 I owe this useful distinction to M. Schofield, "Communism in Plato and the Stoics," an unpublished paper submitted to the conference on pre-modern communism (Cambridge, 1992).

65 Herodotus, *Histories*, 4: 104. The translation is A. de Selincourt's.

66 Pompeius Trogus (first century A.D.) in A.O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, 1935), 67.

67 Cf. Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*; J. Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World* (London, 1975), 19 f.

68 Cf. A. Christensen, *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi*, part 1 (Stockholm, 1917), 145 ff., on Hōshang.

69 Above, note 17; Malaṭī, *Tanbīh*, 72; cf. also Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, 84; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, 197 [197]. For the Iranian Adam (Gayōmard), see Christensen, *Premier homme*, 41 ff.

70 The evidence is assembled in Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*. To the section on India (by Dumont), add W. Doniger O'Flaherty, *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley, 1976), ch. 2.

tal that Greece, Iran, and India alike produced thinkers who rejected private property and pair bonding while at the same time sponsoring vegetarianism and pacifism, though only the Greeks and the Iranians considered the possibility of collectivizing women and wealth, the Indian solution always being to renounce them.

There are however three additional features to consider on the Iranian side. 460
First, Herodotus claims that among the Massagetes, an Iranian tribe, "each man marries a wife, but the wives are common to all. … When a man desires a woman, he hangs a quiver before her waggon."[71] This description suggests that what the Greeks took to be communism of women among the Massagetes was in fact polyandry, that is, the institution whereby a number of men share one wife (or one woman has a plurality of husbands). Whether this could account for the imputations of communism to other Iranian pastoralists is less clear.[72] In any event, the institution is associated with matrilineal organization; and references to both polyandry and matrilineal organization crop up again in connection with the Khurramīs.[73] It is thus tempting to speculate that familiarity with polyandry lay behind the ease with which the Zarādushtīs could envisage general sharing of women. But this is highly conjectural.

Secondly and more importantly, however, whether polyandry was practised in ancient Iran or not, there certainly was another institution of wife sharing. Zoroastrianism sanctioned a variety of arrangements designed to procure male heirs for those who lacked them.[74] Usually the men in question had died without male issue, but they might also be alive; and two of the arrangements designed for these situations amounted to wife lending. A man could give his wife to another man with a view to procuring heirs for himself ("rent an inseminator"). He would retain his guardianship over his wife, in addition to his rights to any children she might bear; and the arrangement would come to an end

71 Herodotus, *Histories*, 1: 216 (the translation is Godley's).

72 As seen already, Herodotus also imputes it to the Agathyrsoi, presumably an offshoot of the Scythians (above, note 65); and Herodotus knew that others attributed it to the Scythians themselves, though he himself did not believe it: "The Greeks say that this is a Scythian custom; it is not so, but a custom of the Massagetae" (*Histories*, 1: 216). His correction notwithstanding, later authors continued to present the Scythians as communists, usually in respect of women and property alike (Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*, 288 f., 315n, 327, cf. 328), but it seems unlikely that there was more to it than an initial mistake and continued romanticism.

73 Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 25 and notes 112–117 thereto.

74 Cf. A. Perikhanian, "Iranian Society and Law," in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3, 2, 649 f., 653 ff.

when a son was born or when the term specified in the agreement expired.[75] Apparently he could also lend her to another man, so that the latter could procure sons ("lend a womb"), though this is more contentious.[76] Both institutions, which are sometimes subsumed under the label of interim marriage, counted as charitable. The Zarādushtī idea that women should be shared would thus appear to be a generalized version of a charitable institution rooted in Zoroas-
461 trianism itself;[77] and its origins in this institution would | explain why it combined communal access to women with continued subordination of women: When the Greeks and the Indians thought away pair bonding, they tended to think away male control of women too.[78]

Thirdly, a good case can be made for the view that the Gnosticism prevalent in Sasanian Iraq acted as a catalyst in the formulation of the creed. Some scholars would have it that Zarādusht actually got his ideas from the Gnostics who go under the (probably mistaken) name of Carpocratians and who believed in sharing wives and property too;[79] but though the parallel is certainly striking, this is implausible. There is no evidence for this particular brand of Gnosticism in Iraq, let alone further east; and modern attempts to have Zarādusht visit the Roman empire (under the name of Bundos) in order to pick up Carpocratian ideas (or other Greco-Roman thought) are wholly unconvincing.[80] But Carpocratians aside, Iraq was full of Gnostics; and though the supposition that Zarādusht was active in Iraq is conjectural, Gnosticism was certainly a factor in Mazdak's thought, as is clear from a cosmological fragment of his preserved

75 Perikhanian, "Iranian Law and Society," 650; compare M. Shaki, "The Sassanian Matrimonial Relations," *Archiv Orientální*, 39 (1971), *330 f.*.

76 C. Bartholomae, "Zum sasanidischen Recht, I," *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie* (1918), 29 f., 36 ff.; disputed by Shaki, "Matrimonial Relations," 324 f., but not convincingly (*cf*. Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 25 and note 103 thereto).

77 Thus already Christensen, *L'Iran*, 329 f., 344 f.

78 The Zarādushtīs have also been presented as female liberators (Pigulevskaja, *Villes*, 200; Klíma, *Mazdak*, 186), but this is certainly mistaken (*cf*. Shaki, "Social Doctrine," 301 ff.).

79 Klíma, *Mazdak*, 209 ff. (but he later changed his mind; cf. Klíma, *Beiträge*, 129, n. 20); Carratelli, "Doctrines sociales de Bundos et Mazdak," 288 ff.; Yarshater, "Mazdakism," 1020. Klíma helpfully translates Clement of Alexandria's extract from the Carpocratian treatise "On Justice," of which there is also an English summary in N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London, 1984; first published 1957), 189 f. Cohn asserts that the treatise is probably not of Gnostic origin, with reference to H. Kraft, "Gab es einen Gnostiker Karpokrates?," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, 8 (1952); but Kraft does not deny the Gnostic origins of the treatise, only the existence of a Gnostic sect by the name of Carpocratians.

80 Cf. Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 28.

by a Muslim heresiographer.[81] Gnosticism was well placed to act as a catalyst in that it concerned itself with man's original state; had unconventional views on the relations between the sexes; was fundamentally subversive; and last, but not least, rejected the things of this world, which is precisely what Zoroastrianism and its Zarādushtī offshoot did not.[82] The Zarādushtī claim that women and wealth are the chief causes of human unhappiness was a Gnostic commonplace, as was the view that war and bloodshed should be avoided. But the Gnostic solution (like that of the Indians) was renunciatory: Women, wealth, war, and eating meat had to be given up so that mankind might liberate itself from matter. By contrast, the Zarādushtī solution was life-affirming: War and eating meat were indeed to be given up, but not because they entangled man in matter, only because nobody was allowed to inflict damage on other living beings, life in the here and now being good; and women and wealth were not to be renounced but on the contrary to be | shared, enjoyment of the here and 462
now (in the right measure) being part of the struggle against evil. Zarādushtism could be characterized as Gnostic thought in a life-affirming spirit, and this is so odd a phenomenon that some scholars have trouble accepting it.[83] But whatever else may be said about Zarādushtism, run-of-the-mill it was not. The key to its oddity seems to lie in the fact that it was a Zoroastrian answer to Gnosticism.

Postscript

p. 447 [50]:
For Xanthus of Lydia, see now A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Leiden, 1997), 424.

p. 455 [59]:
For some remarkable parallels to the Zarādushtī view of property, see Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 182 f.: "They believe that all things are common,

81 Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 193 f., in vol. 1, 291 ff.; cf. H. Halm, "Die Sieben und die Zwölf. Die ismāʿīlitische Kosmogonie und das Mazdak-Fragment des Šahrastānī," in *XVIII. Deutscher Orientalistentag*, W. Voigt, ed. (Wiesbaden, 1974); Shaki, "Cosmogonical and Cosmological Teachings."

82 That Zarādushtism was an offshoot of Zoroastrianism rather than Manichaeism should no longer need to be stressed, though Christensen's mistaken ideas to the contrary still have not been flushed out of the secondary literature (*cf*. Crone, "Kavād's Heresy," 26 *ff*.).

83 Cf. above, note 40. That it is the presence of Gnostic ideas in Khurramism which causes some to present them as ascetics is particularly clear in Duchesne-Guillemin.

whence they conclude that theft is lawful to them," the Bishop of Strasbourg reported of the adepts of the Free Spirit in 1317; cheating, theft, and robbery with violence were all justified, an adept by the name of John of Brünn confirmed. The Spiritual Libertines described by Calvin also held that nobody should possess anything of his own and that each should take whatever he could lay hands on, while the seventeenth-century Ranter Abiezer Coppe exhorted his followers to "Give, give, give, give up your houses, horses, goods, lands, give up, account nothing your own, have all things in common …".

p. 461 [66]:
For the Carpocratians, see the helpful discussion in D. Dawson, *Cities of the Gods: Communist Utopias in Greek Thought* (Oxford, 1992), 264–267, with full references.

See also the postscript to the previous article.

CHAPTER 3

Khurramīs

Khurramīs (or Khurramdīnīs) were adherents of a form of Iranian religion often identified as a survival or revival of the Zoroastrian heresy, Mazdakism. Their name first appears in 118/736, when the Hāshimite missionary Khidāsh was repudiated for having adopted *dīn al-Khurramiyya* (Ṭabarī, II, p. 1588). After the Hāshimite revolution the Khurramīs are encountered as rebels under Sunbādh at Rayy in 137/755, under Muqannaʿ in Sogdia in ca. 158–163/775–80, under diverse other leaders in Gurgān in 162/778–779, 179/795–796, and 181/797–798, in the Jibāl in 162/778–779, 192/807–808, 212/827–828, and 218/833, and under Bābak in Azerbaijan in 201–222/816–37 (see Sadighi; Daniel). Other revolts are reported for the Jibāl and upper Mesopotamia under the caliph al-Wāthiq (r. 842–847); and in 321/933 ʿAlī b. Būya stormed some Khurramī fortresses in the Karaj region (Niẓām al-Mulk, chap. 47, par. 13; Michael the Syrian, IV, p. 542, tr. III, p. 109; Miskawayh, I, p. 278, tr. IV, p. 316; Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, p. 269). There are also scattered reports on Khurramī communities down to the 12th and even the 13th centuries (ʿAwfī, p. 274).

They are invariably described as rural. They had no single overall organization or creed and seem to have differed from one locality to the next, but all are said to have believed in periodic and/or continuous incarnation or indwelling of the divine in man (*ḥulūl*, *tanāsukh*), in reincarnation of the human spirit (*rajʿa*, *tanāsukh al-arwāḥ*) in accordance with merit, and, at least in western Iran, in kindness to all living beings, sometimes coupled with abstention from meat-eating. The feature most commonly associated with them is a practice denigrated as "sharing their womenfolk" (*ibāḥat al-nisāʾ*), to which *ibāḥat al-māl*, "sharing of property," is occasionally added. No writings by them are preserved, or even mentioned. The *Kitāb al-khurramiyya* mentioned by Maqdisī (II, p. 20) was probably a book about them, perhaps, but hardly Abū Zayd al-Balkhī's chapter on them in his *ʿUyūn al-masāʿil waʾl-jawābāt* (Ibn al-Nadīm, 406.7, tr. p. 817). But they did have learned men, and Muslims sometimes engaged in disputation with them (Abū Tammām, p. 77, tr. p. 76; Maqdisī, III, p. 122; Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh*, pp. 353 f.; Muqaddasī, pp. 398 f.).

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Relationship with Mazdakism

Though Khurramism and Mazdakism are undoubtedly related, the Khurramīs are too widely attested to be the residue or a revival of a defeated sect. Their presence stretched from Isfahan northwards through the Zagros mountains to Qāshān, Qum, Rayy, Hamadān, Daylam, Azerbaijan, and upper Mesopotamia/Armenia, with particularly dense attestation in the Jibāl. Eastwards it ran through Gurgān to Khurasan, Ṭukhāristān (including Balkh and other parts of what is now Afghanistan), Sogdia (including the countryside around Bukhara, Samarqand, Kish, and Nasaf), to Shāsh, Khujand, Īlāq, Kāsān, and Farghāna beyond the Jaxartes (Syr Darya). They were found from the mountain ranges of Anatolia to those of Tien Shan, far beyond the boundaries of the Sasanian empire. This suggests that we should see Khurramism as the religion of rural Iran, a Zoroastrian "low church" (Madelung, 1988, p. 3), from which the founders of Mazdakism emerged, rather than as a heresy which they founded. Pursued in local organizations such as that which Bābak took over in Azerbaijan, this "low church" will have functioned much like rural Sufism in later times and should not be envisaged as intrinsically rebellious. Its organized nature did however facilitate revolt when the Khurramīs were politicized.

Unlike the founders of Mazdakism, the Khurramīs do not seem to have subscribed to revolutionary ideas regarding women and property, but they certainly had practices offensive to the Muslims. Reconstructing these practices is mostly impossible. Some reports seem to relate women being lent out one way or the other, to guests, priests, or other men, in displays of generosity or with a view to obtaining a blessing or good offspring; others may refer to fraternal polyandry, documented for Ṭukhāristān and other parts of Afghanistan (and well beyond, into India and Tibet), in Chinese sources, in Bīrūnī (*Hind*, p. 52, tr. I, p. 108), and now also in Bactrian documents of the fourth and eighth centuries CE (Sims-Williams, nos. A, X, Y). Fraternal polyandry is a system whereby brothers inherit the property of their parents without dividing it up, cultivate it in common, and share a wife, whose sons will jointly take over the family property in their turn. The system allows the property to pass intact from one generation to the next and is attested above all in mountainous areas where the land is poor. It is in some sense quite true that women and property are shared in polyandrous societies, but not in the sense that they are free for all to use as they please. An Indian high court judge who reported on fraternal polyandry in north India in the 1950s called it "a sort of family communism in wives … a joint family both in property and wives" (Peter, p. 83). It would seem to have been this family communism which Zarādusht of Fasā and Mazdak elevated into a utopian vision: all members of the Sasanian kingdom had to behave *as if*

they were brothers. Explaining how communist ideas could have developed in Iran has long been a problem, and it has generated some far-fetched theories of influence from the Greek-speaking world (cf. Crone, 1991, p. 28), but they are hardly necessary.

Divine Incarnation (*ḥulūl*)

The idea of the same divine being appearing in different incarnations is attested in the *Bahrām Yasht* (*Yt.* 14; cf. *Yt.* 8.13, 16, 20), but something close to the Khurramī conception is first attested in the Book of Elchasai, composed around 116 CE in "Parthia," that is, Mesopotamia under Parthian rule, by a Jewish Baptist and perhaps a follower of Christianity. The book itself is lost, but the idea that the same divine being appears time and again, putting on different bodies, was shared by the Baptist followers of Elchasai in lower Iraq, the Elchasaite Baptists in Rome, where the book had been brought by a Greek-speaking Syrian, and by diverse Baptist readers of the book in Palestine, including the Ebionites and Nazoreans, from whom it went into the Pseudo-Clementines (Luttikhuizen, modified by Merkelbach and Cirillo). In Palestine, the doctrine was understood conservatively: only Adam and Christ, the first and the last, were genuine incarnations; in between, the divine being only appeared to the patriarchs (cf. Gieschen, pp. 208 f.). But the Elchasaite baptists, from whom Mani broke away, seem to have understood all of them as incarnations, and Mani himself certainly did. To him, the Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus were divine beings who had come "without a body" to take up abode in human beings; he himself had become "one spirit in one body" with the Paraclete, and all apostles were incarnations of the pre-existing "Apostle of Light," who "puts on the saints as his garments." All were really a single spirit (Cirillo, pp. 50–52; Lieu, pp. 236, 242, 246; Gardner and Lieu, p. 75; Gardner, p. 132).

The Khurramīs envisaged the incarnation of the divine now as periodic and now as continuous. Muqannaʿ held God's spirit to have taken up abode in messengers (*rusul*) at long intervals, starting with Adam and running via the founders of religions, including Muḥammad, to Muqannaʿ himself, the Mahdī. The Khurramīs of the west similarly believed in "the change of the name and the body, claiming that all the messengers, with their diverse laws and religions, come into possession of a single spirit" (Maqdisī, IV, p. 30; cf. *Clementine Homilies*, III, p. 20). But more commonly we hear of the divinity as inherent in a continuous chain of community leaders (imams). A Rāwandī (on whom see below) executed before the Hāshimite (also known as Abbasid) revolution, for example, held that the spirit which had been in Jesus had

entered ʿAlī and passed from him via other imams to the Abbasid Ibrāhīm al-Imām, so that all the imams were gods (Ṭabarī, III, p. 418). Either way, the divinity was envisaged now as light (e.g., Nawbakhtī, p. 29; Qummī, no. 80) and now as spirit, sometimes identified as the holy spirit (e.g., Ps.-Nāshiʾ, par. 56). These conceptions should perhaps be related to the Iranian concept of *xᵛarənah*, the divine light and spiritual force which is shared by Ahura Mazda, Zoroaster, the legendary and historical kings, and the future saviors.

The sudden prominence of the idea of divine incarnation in 2nd/8th-century Iran reflects the fact that large numbers of Iranians had been recruited into Muslim armies, and thus into Muslim society, by the Hāshimiyya in Khurasan and by ʿAbd Allāh b. Muʿāwiya in western Iran. The recruits seem regularly to have cast the leaders of their new religious community as divine. Many of them seceded however, when, as repeatedly happened, the man to whom they owed their presence in Muslim society was killed. The first waves of secession came already before the revolution, triggered by the execution of Khidāsh in 118/736 and by the killing of ʿAbd Allāh b. Muʿāwiya in Abū Muslim's jail in Herat in 131/748–749. When Abū Muslim was himself killed in 137/755, more extensive waves of secession followed, initially among his own by now unemployed troops, eventually further afield, among people uprooted by the revolution or adversely affected by the massive upheavals that followed. In all three cases the secessionists cast the victim as the true imam (and/or prophet), to reconstitute themselves as separate communities under leaders of their own. They continued to trace the imamate from Muḥammad: the leadership of the community had passed to ʿAlī, Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, and Abū Hāshim, who bequeathed it to ʿAbd Allāh b. Muʿāwiya (according to the Janāḥiyya and Ḥārithiyya/Ḥarbiyya) or to a member of the Abbasid family (according to former members of the Hāshimiyya), from whom it has passed to Khidāsh (according to the Khidāshiyya) or Abū Muslim (according to the Muslimiyya). Their imams thereafter were usually Iranians and never Hāshimites (Ps.-Nāshiʾ, par. 52). By the 12th century, the Khurramīs in Azerbaijan had extended the imamate chain back in time to include the Persian kings and taken to calling themselves Pārsīs. They had also become ʿAlid Shiʿites: God had manifested himself in Muḥammad, ʿAlī, and Salmān al-Fārsī, and their two current leaders were in the position of Muḥammad and ʿAlī, the light manifesting itself now in three persons and now in one or two (Madelung, 1988, pp. 9–12).

In Iraq, too, the murder of Abū Muslim severely tested the loyalties of the Khurāsānīs, but here the so-called Rāwandiyya reacted by casting al-Manṣūr as the Mahdī, the full manifestation of God introducing the heavenly realm, justifying his killing of Abū Muslim (cast as his prophet) on the grounds that his will was inscrutable (he killed his prophets and messengers as he wished;

Nawbakhtī, p. 47). If he wanted to make the mountains move, they would move, they said, and if he wanted them to pray with their backs to the *qibla*, they too would obey (Balādhurī, III, p. 235; cf. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, par. 12). The spirit of Adam had taken up abode in one of the caliph's officers, ʿUthmān b. Nahīk; and another, Haytham b. Muʿāwiya, was a manifestation of Gabriel. The Rāwandiyya sold their possessions and jumped naked or dressed in silken clothes (presumably those of the people of paradise; cf. Qurʾān 18:31) from walls and other high places in Iraq and Syria, thinking they would fly to heaven, or that they had become angels (Ṭabarī, III, pp. 129 f., 418; Balādhurī, III, pp. 235 f.; Azdī, p. 173; Theophanes *AM* 6250). Like Muqannaʿ and some followers of Ibn Muʿāwiya, they thought in terms of seven eras, but they construed the eras with reference to imams rather than seven messengers or seven Adams (Ibn al-Jawzī, VIII, pp. 29 f.; cf. Ps.-Nāshiʾ, par. 58). The episode is variously set in 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, or 142, but more than one may have been involved, for in 141–142 it was the caliph's son, that is, al-Mahdī, rather than al-Manṣūr himself that the Rāwandiyya deified (Theophanes *AM* 6252; for the Basran episode mentioned there, cf. Dīnawarī, p. 380).

Muqannaʿ was among those who remained in Abbasid service after Abū Muslim's murder, in Marw, where he turned rebellious some time after the downfall of his employer, ʿAbd al-Jabbār, in 141/758. The sources on his message do not mention the imamate, and it is probably by confusion with the Muslimiyya that they include Abū Muslim in his sequence of messengers, making Muqannaʿ himself the Mahdī, the eighth rather than the seventh (Crone, 2011; cf. Ibn Dāʿī Rāzī, p. 179), though Muqannaʿ may well have deified Abū Muslim in another prophetic capacity, or as king (cf. Thaʿālibī, no. 14). There is no reference to the imamate in the earliest source on Bābak either, apparently because the Khurramī cult organization he led was still wholly non-Islamic. Bābak succeeded Jāwīdān b. Ṣahrak as leader on the ground that the latter's spirit had passed into him (Ibn al-Nadīm, 407.11, 17, tr. II, pp. 820 f.; Ṭabarī, III, p. 1015), and identified himself as "the spirit of the prophets" (Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, p. 62), presumably meaning that the holy spirit which had moved the prophets of the past, including Jāwīdān, was now active in him. Unlike early Christian prophets, Bābak was not simply a passive instrument like a lyre or flute through which the holy spirit would speak from time to time (cf. Aune, pp. 204, 315 f.). Rather, it dwelled in him permanently, rendering him divine (Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, p. 62; Ibn al-Nadīm, 406.10, tr. II, p. 818). He was not the Mahdī, however, and he did not wear a veil; rather he was a community leader. A full incarnation of the deity had appeared in the Mesopotamia/Armenia region around the same time. His followers are described among the Khurramīs as pagans and "Magians in their cult," suggesting that they venerated fire; but they were also Christians of sorts,

for their long-awaited king called himself the holy spirit and Christ, as well as the Mahdī. He was held to be divine and, like Muqannaʿ, wore a veil. After his death and that of a successor, his followers accepted Bābak as their leader (Michael Syr., IV, pp. 508 f., tr. III, pp. 50–52; *Chron. 1234*, pp. 25 ff., tr. pp. 17–19; Bar Hebraeus, p. 131, all from Dionysius of Tell-Maḥré [a chronicle written in 774 CE under the name Dionysius, a monk from Tell-Maḥré in Mesopotamia]).

The Khurramīs are reported to have believed in continuous prophecy (Abū ʿĪsā in Ibn al-Malāḥimī, p. 584; Bīrūnī in Fück, p. 80; Maqdisī, III, p. 8, IV, p. 30). It is not easy to tell whether they held that there could be prophets such as Adam, Jesus, or Muḥammad in the future or that the sequence of divine community leaders (prophets, spirit-bearers, and the like in Christian parlance, imams in Muslim parlance) would continue forever. They may not have distinguished sharply between the two, the key difference being rather between such figures and the final, full incarnations of the divine, the Christ or Mahdī, with whom the material world, or the current cycle, would come to an end.

Some 50 years after Bābak's death, Bābak had come to be identified as a descendant of Abū Muslim, implying that his followers now thought in terms of the imamate (Dīnawarī, p. 397). Thereafter the Muslimī nature of the Khurramīs in Azerbaijan and elsewhere in western Iran is well attested (see, e.g., Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, IV, par. 2398).

The sources regularly use the term *tanāsukh* for periodic and continuous incarnation of the divine, but no reincarnation was involved. The divine spirit was normally envisaged as taking up abode in adult human beings (for Jesus as an exception, see Maqdisī, III, p. 122). Muqannaʿ's followers held God's spirit to have entered Muḥammad in the encounter described in Qurʾān 53:3–10 (Abū Tammām, p. 76, tr. p. 75). Others claimed that the divinity had passed, in a form visible to ʿĀʾisha, from Muḥammad to ʿAlī, who had ingested it (Ps.-Nāshiʾ, par. 56); and Bābak was an adult when Jāwīdān's spirit passed into him. Another term for periodic incarnation is *qalb*, explained in connection with the Khidāshiyya as the belief that God can change (*yaqliba*) Himself from one shape (*ṣūra*) to another and clothe himself in different visible forms (*manāẓīr*). In support of this, the Khidāshiyya would adduce the ability of a lesser being such as Gabriel to do the same, as recorded in Hadith. Here Gabriel merely appears in the guise of known or unknown people, however (Ps.-Nāshiʾ, par. 49). In the Khurramī conception the deity did not merely simulate a body or create one for itself; rather it entered a person with an identity of his own. We also hear of *zanādiqat al-naṣārā*, "dualist/quasi-Manichaean Christians," who held that the spirit in Jesus was the spirit of God, from the essence of God (*ruḥ Allāh min dhāt Allāh*), explaining that God would enter a human being when He wished to convey His commands and speak human language (Ibn Ḥanbal, p. 19).

Reincarnation

According to Euboulos (date uncertain), quoted by Porphyry (d. ca. 305), the Magi practiced various degrees of vegetarianism, because "it is the belief of them all that metempsychosis is of the first importance." Porphyry also refers to a certain Pallas, who probably wrote under Hadrian (d. 138) and who explained the Mithraic habit of giving animal names to initiates as an allegory of human souls, which, they (the Magi) said, "put on all kinds of bodies" (Porphyry, IV, 16). Both reincarnation and non-violence to animals reappear in Manicheism. Mani is usually assumed to have picked up the doctrine of reincarnation from Buddhism in India or alternatively from the Greeks (Heinrichs, pp. 97 ff.; Bryder, pp. 488 f.; cf. Bīrūnī, *Hind*, p. 27, tr. I, pp. 54 f.), but he only traveled to India after having formed his system, and his closely related doctrine of non-violence went far beyond anything found in Buddhism in that it extended to plants, trees, air, earth, and even stones. Thus, the Indian influence would have had to come from Jains. The possibility of Jain influence has in fact been aired (see Fynes; Gardner; Deeg and Gardner), but although the coincidences are striking, both Indian and Greek inspiration would seem unnecessary in that Mani's views on reincarnation and non-violence were intimately connected with his conception of the world as a mixture of light and darkness. In this conception, light (divinity) was present in everything in this world and circulated thanks to natural processes, and everything endowed with light was live, sentient, and could feel pain. In the opinion of Shahrastānī (p. 133, tr. I, p. 511), all nations, including the Zoroastrians, had groups who believed in reincarnation. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (*Kitāb al-iṣlāḥ*, p. 159) claims that Mazdak, a Zoroastrian priest, believed in it, and Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq implies the same: according to him, Mazdak permitted the killing of opponents on the grounds that it would liberate their spirits from their harmful bodies, that is, save them from bad reincarnations (Ibn al-Malāḥimī, 584.4; cf. Shahrastānī, p. 193, tr. I, p. 663; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, V, p. 65; tr. Monnot, p. 237). All the Khurramīs are said to have believed in reincarnation (Ps.-Nāshi', pars. 57 f.; Shahrastānī, p. 185, tr. I, p. 641), probably including the Rāwandiyya (Ibn Qutayba, p. 227), though Baghdādī did not think so (255.6).

Practically all further details come from an account relating to the followers of ʿAbd Allāh b. Muʿāwiya, though it is also cited with reference to other groups (Ps.-Nāshi', pars. 57 f.; Nawbakhtī, pp. 32–34, 35–37; Qummī, nos. 93, 97 f.; Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, pp. 308–310; Ibn Dāʿī Rāzī, pp. 87 ff.; Freitag, pp. 9 ff.). The sectarians denied the resurrection, insisting that there was no world other than this one or, as they also put it, that the resurrection consisted in the spirit leaving the body for another body or form (*qālab*, *ṣūra*). Bodies were like clothes that

got worn out or houses one moved out of, and only the spirit was rewarded or punished. Obedient spirits would be moved into pure bodies of beautiful shapes for pleasurable lives and, according to some, continue to move up in the ranks of goodness, purity, and pleasure until they became angels and acquired pure bodies of light, while disobedient spirits would move into impure and ugly bodies of dogs, monkeys, pigs, serpents, dung beetles, scorpions, and the like, to be tormented forever. Some associated reincarnation with cycles: God had created seven Adams, corresponding to seven eras; each Adam would initiate an era of 50,000 years, at the end of which the righteous would be raised to the first heaven as angels while the rest would be placed below the earth. The ants, scarabs, and dung beetles that crawled around in people's houses were nations that God had destroyed in the past. At the end of every era, those who had already been saved or damned would move further up or down to the next heaven or earth. When all the seven eras were over, religious worship would come to an end. They also had doctrines about the "shadows," presumably along the lines known from the later *Kitāb al-haft wa'l-aẓilla* attributed to al-Mufaḍḍal b. ʿUmar al-Juʿfī (Halm, pp. 24 ff.), though this book differs in being Gnostic in character and focused on ʿAlī. Some operated with different cycles, claiming that believers would assume human bodies for periods of 10,000 years followed by 1,000 years in animal bodies, in the best form in both cases, whereas unbelievers would spend 10,000 years in animal bodies of the worst kind, followed by 1,000 years as miserable humans such as tanners and sweepers. The alternations were meant as tests, and apparently these cycles would go on forever: there is no reference to release, whether individual or collective (cf. their eternalism in Ashʿarī, pp. 6, 46). Some believers in reincarnation claimed to recognize each other from one period to the next, typologically rather than individually, as the people who had been with Noah in the Ark, who had followed the other prophets in their time, and who had been the Companions of Muḥammad (*ṣaḥāba*). They would take their names, claiming that that their spirit was in them (similarly Ibn Qutayba, p. 227). Some called themselves *al-ḥawāriyyūn* among themselves (Baghdādī, p. 236).

The Khurramī term for reincarnation was *rajʿa* (Nawbakhtī, pp. 33, 37; Qummī, no. 98) and they would adduce verses 6:38, 29:64, 32:26, 35:24, 82:8, 84:19, and 95:4–6 in support of it. The poet Kuthayyir ʿAzza believed in *tanāsukh al-arwāḥ* and *rajʿa*, probably meaning the same, and Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī held that it was possible to be reincarnated as an animal (Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, VIII, p. 243; IX, pp. 4, 17–19; cf. Wellhausen, p. 93). Much later we learn that Mardāwīj, the 4th/10th-century military adventurer from Gīlān, claimed to have the spirit of Solomon in him (Ibn al-Athīr, VIII, p. 298, year 323). Like other Khurramīs, he was both himself and somebody else.

Non-Violence

As mentioned above, the Magi (according to Euboulos in Porphyry) who believed in reincarnation practiced varying degrees of vegetarianism. Vegetarianism and pacifism are also reported for Kavād I, the Sasanian king who adopted the utopia of Zarādusht of Fasā (Crone, 1991, p. 26). But though Bābak complained that the hands and breath of his prison-guard stank of meat (Ṭabarī, III, p. 1228), he and his followers ate meat on a ritual occasion (Ibn al-Nadīm, 407.19, tr. II, p. 821) and he would hunt, too (Ṭabarī, III, pp. 225 f.). Of the Khurramīs of western Iran in general, however, we are told that they believed in "acts of charity (*afʿāl al-khayr*) and refraining from killing and inflicting harm on souls" (Ibn al-Nadīm, 406.4, tr. II, p. 817), and that they took great care to avoid bloodshed, except when they rebelled (Maqdisī, IV, p. 31; wrongly attributed to the Mubayyiḍa along with Muslimī beliefs in Abū Tammām, p. 78, tr. p. 77). They also disapproved of speaking ill of the adherents of other religions as long as they did not seek to inflict harm on oneself: all messengers were really the same, and the followers of all religions were right as long as they believed in requital after death (Maqdisī, IV, pp. 30 f.). To the Khurramīs (now Pārsīs) of 6th/12th-century Azerbaijan, bloodshed was one of the five deadly sins, as was hurting other people or anything living; even hammering a peg into the earth was forbidden lest it be hurt by it (Madelung, 1988, p. 10). Their dislike of bloodshed was not linked with asceticism. They revered wine and insisted on the lawfulness of all pleasures as long as they did not harm others (Maqdisī, IV, p. 31); the "old Mazdak" (i.e., Zarādusht of Fasā) had ordered them to partake of all pleasures (Ibn al-Nadīm, 406.2, tr. II, p. 817).

Their doctrine of non-violence was not sufficiently prominent for the Muslims to have a name for it. They were also notoriously violent as rebels, and anything but charitable in their visions of revenge. But Maqdisī (IV, p. 31) found those he met in Māsabadhān and Mihrijānqadhaq to be extremely kind people.

Cosmology, Pan-Psychism

Abū ʿĪsā had heard that the Khurramīs believed light and darkness to have always existed and that the "Mazdaqiyya" subscribed to a (Zoroastrian?) cosmological doctrine which had also influenced the Manicheans, to the effect that darkness was ignorant and blind and had swallowed some of the light by accident (Ibn al-Malāḥimī, pp. 583 f., 598; cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, V, p. 16, cf. pp. 64 f., tr. Monnot, pp. 163 f., 237; Shahrastānī, pp. 185, 192 f., tr. I, pp. 641, 663, turning the Mazdaqiyya into Mazdak himself). These Mazdaqiyya seem to have been a sub-

division of the Khurramīs in (urban?) Iraq (Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh*, 353.ult.; Shahrastānī, p. 113, tr. I, p. 449). Maqdisī (I, p. 143) credits the Khurramīs with the doctrine that everything began as light, probably by misunderstanding Abū ʿĪsā, though there must in fact have been many Khurramī cosmologies. Qummī (no. 127) more broadly says that "most of their doctrines are those of the Zoroastrians."

Some Khurramīs held that the separation would come about accidentally (Shahrastānī, p. 193, tr. I, p. 663, replacing Abū ʿĪsā's Mazdaqiyya with Mazdak; cf. Ibn al-Malāḥimī, pp. 583 f.). Others seem to have been eternalists (cf. above), and there were also Khurramīs inclined towards Manicheism in unidentified respects (Ibn al-Malāḥimī, 584.1). Like the Manicheans, though in a more positive vein, they seem to have thought of light, the divine element, as all-pervasive. It is this idea, variously called animism, pan-psychism, or pantheism in the modern literature, that lies behind their belief in reincarnation, nonviolence, and divine incarnation alike (cf. Shahrastānī, p. 133, tr. I, pp. 511 f.; Malaṭī, p. 17). Ultimately, it was the same light or spirit which manifested itself again and again in different forms and strengths, in humans, animals, and inanimate things alike, rendering all of them live and sentient. There was no sharp distinction between the divine, the human, and the animal worlds, or between past and present: just as the same divine being incarnated itself time and again, so the same people lived on again and again, in human or animal form. The fact that there are Indian analogues to the key Khurramī and Manichean doctrines (*avatāra*, *saṃsāra*, *ahiṃsā*) should probably be credited to the shared roots of Indian and Iranian religion rather than Indian influence.

Antinomianism

The Khurramīs were notorious for not living by Islamic law. Their villages had no mosques, and if they did, only for outsiders, and although they (or some of them) would teach their children the Qurʾān, they did not pray, observe the dietary taboos of Islam, or perform ablutions according to Islamic precepts; and they married only among themselves (Muqaddasī, pp. 398 f.; Iṣṭakhrī, p. 203; Baghdādī, p. 252; Abū Tammām, p. 77, tr. p. 76). But they had their own norms, for which they would consult their imams, and purity was of the utmost importance to them (Maqdisī, IV, p. 31). They argued their way out of Islamic law by interpreting it allegorically, holding the commands and prohibitions to stand for persons or activities one should seek out or avoid; or they said that the (literal meaning of) the law did not apply to those who knew the imam (Abū

Tammām, p. 77, tr. p. 76; Ps.-Nāshiʾ, pars. 48 f., 59). Since the entire community knew the imam, this was presumably a way of legitimating an ancestral way of life rather than antinomian behavior by perfected individuals, though the tone in which it is reported often suggests the latter. The Khurramīs undoubtedly saw themselves as the only saved, however. As the only people of Paradise they were free to take the women, children, and property of other Muslims when the apocalypse came (and they rebelled), but it does not follow that they, or the perfected among them, were free to take what they wanted at all times, let alone among themselves (it is misrepresented as a doctrine of Mazdakite sharing in Bīrūnī's reporting on Muqannaʿ). The Khidāshiyya are credited with extreme hostility to outsiders even when they were unable to rebel; they interpreted *jihād* as meaning killing opponents by assassination, strangling, crushing, or poisoning, probably meaning that even such methods were allowed rather than that such methods were ritually prescribed; their property could be taken, and a fifth had to be given to the imam, as if it were booty taken in war (Ps.-Nāshiʾ, par. 49). How far the sense of being the only elect spilled over in a sense that individuals could reach a state of such perfection that they were above the law, even their own, under normal conditions is hard to say. Some may have held that they could become angels, divine beings, or people of Paradise in the here and now, and the possibility that "transgressive sacrality" was a feature of some communities cannot be ruled out. One account of Rāwandī practice in the east (Ṭabarī, III, p. 418) could refer to sexual rituals used in Buddhist (or Shaivite, cf. Škoda) Tantrism. Maqdisī (IV, p. 31) confirms that some Khurramīs endorsed the sharing of womenfolk (*ibāḥat al-nisāʾ*), with the women's consent, but does not tell us what it consisted in. The Pārsīs of 6th/12th-century Azerbaijan were strictly monogamous and forbade both divorce and the purchase of slaves. Yet they held that women were like a well that anyone could drink from (Madelung, 1988, p. 10). Did they mean that adultery was not a sin, or that women could be given to holy men for blessing, or, on the contrary, that since women were common to all, they had to be distributed equally, so that nobody could have more than one? It is impossible to tell.

Nomenclature and Subdivisions

We do not know what the Khurramīs were called before the coming of Islam, but *Khurramdīn*, "adherent of the joyous religion," is a term coined on the model of *Bihdīn*, "adherent of the good religion," that is, Zoroastrianism, and could be a self-designation. The heresiographers usually relate the name to the

scandalous sexual practices of the Khurramīs, but if the name had been coined with reference to them, a more offensive term than "joyous" would surely have been chosen. However this may be, when the sources speak of Khurramīs, it is usually the Muslimiyya that they have in mind, usually those of the Zagros and Alborz mountains or Azerbaijan, but occasionally also those of eastern Iran (see, e.g., Balkhī in Ibn al-Nadīm, 408.13, tr. p. 824). Ps.-Nāshi' (probably Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb) identifies the Khidāshiyya as the Khurramīs in Khurasan and the Muslimiyya as those of the Jibāl, clearly oversimplifying. In Khurasan they came to be known as the Bāṭiniyya (Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, VI, par. 2399). Thaʿālibī mentions "Khusrawiyya and Khurramiyya" in, perhaps, the Bādghīs region (Houtsma, p. 35, tr. p. 33). But in the east we more commonly hear of "Whiteclothed ones" (*Mubayyiḍa*, *Sapīd-jāmagān*), often identified as Muqannaʿ's followers, though they existed before him and are found in areas far beyond those involved in his revolt (Gardīzī, p. 273; Muqaddasī, p. 323; Niẓām al-Mulk, chap. 47.22; cf. Shahrastānī, p. 115, tr. I, pp. 454 f.). In Gurgān we hear of "Redclothed ones" (*Muḥammira*, *Surkh-jāmagān*; Daniel, p. 147), a term also used to refer to the Khurramīs of the west (e.g., Ibn al-Nadīm, 405.ult., tr. II, p. 817). We are not told what the differences between them were. Masʿūdī uses the term Muḥammira to refer to a smaller group, distinguishing them from the "Mazdaqiyya, Māhāniyya, and others" (*Kitāb al-tanbīh*, 353.ult.). The Māhāniyya were Iranianized Marcionites, that is, Christians of sorts (Ibn al-Malāḥimī, p. 589), as was clearly true of many Khurramīs before they were Islamized. Masʿūdī also divided the Khurramīs into Kudhakiyya (or Ludhakiyya), Kudhshahiyya (or Ludhshahiyya), and others, placing them in the mountainous regions of western Iran with a wealth of place names, and more cursorily mentioning that they were also found in Khurasan and the rest of Iran (*Kitāb al-tanbīh*, p. 353; cf. idem, *Murūj al-dhahab*, VI, par. 2399). Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (pp. 305 f.; Madelung, 1986, p. 65), on the other hand, says that they were known as Kudhakiyya and Khurramiyya in the Isfahan region, as Mazdakiyya and Sunbādiyya in Rayy and elsewhere in the Jibāl, as Muḥammira in Dīnawar and Nihāwand (al-Māhayn), and as Dhāqūfiyya (or Dhāfūliyya) in Azerbaijan (repeated, slightly differently, by Shahrastānī, p. 132, tr. I, p. 508). Again, we are not told about the differences between them. According to Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (p. 298), Ibn Muʿāwiya's followers, or at least the Ḥārithiyya, were known as Khurramdīnīs, while Shahrastānī (p. 113, tr. I, p. 449) held all Khurramīs to spring from them. They secured toleration through heavy payments to the ruler (Muqaddasī, p. 399; Thaʿālibī, p. 38).

Legacy

Khurramism does not seem to have survived the Mongol invasions. In western Iran and Anatolia, however, belief in divine incarnation and human reincarnation reappeared along with varying degrees of pantheism in the heresies of the Ḥurūfīs, Nuqṭawīs, Bektashis, Qizilbash, Yazidis, Ahl-i Ḥaqq, and others, filtered through Sufism (cf. Pirouzdjou; Babayan; Shāfiʿī-Kadkanī, pp. 55 ff.). All three beliefs had appeared in Sufism already among the 3rd/9th-century Muʿtazilite Sufis, including Aḥmad b. Ḥāʾiṭ (or Khābit), who shared the pan-psychism of the Khurramīs and Manicheans: they held all animate beings and inanimate things, including stones, to be endowed with rationality, and they also believed in reincarnation (Jāḥiẓ, IV, p. 288; Van Ess, III, pp. 430–445). Other Sufis believed in *ḥulūl*, claiming that God could dwell in humans and wild animals, especially beautiful ones (Ashʿarī, pp. 13 f.; Baghdādī, p. 245; Maqdisī, V, p. 148), or that he might dwell in the entire world, animate or inanimate, which they called "the universal manifestation" (*al-ẓuhūr al-kullī*). To those who subscribed to this view, the idea of divine indwelling of the spirits by reincarnation (*ḥulūl al-arwāḥ biʾl-taraddud*) was unproblematic, as stated by Bīrūnī (*Hind*, p. 29, tr. I, pp. 57 f.). The idea that women and property could be freely taken also reappears, both in Sufism and elsewhere (e.g. Malaṭī, pp. 73 f.; Nasafī, p. 359; *Haftād wa sih millat*, nos. 27, 72). Evaluating such reports is notoriously problematic, but we do at least know from Ḥurūfī sources that some Ḥurūfīs held themselves entitled to take everything in existence, believing that they were already in a Paradisical state and thus freed from the constraints of the law: the *ʿārif* could take whatever was within reach and should endeavor to obtain what was in the hands of others (Browne, pp. 75 f.). This is close to Muqannaʿ's preaching in that the concern is with taking the property (and women?) of others, not with sharing within the community. All in all, the legacy of Khurramism and other pan-psychist forms of Iranian religion in Islam seems to be much greater than that of Zoroastrianism as known from the Pahlavi books.

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CHAPTER 4

Muqannaʿ

Muqannaʿ (lit. "the veiled one," d. 163/780 or later) was the leader of a rebellious movement in Sogdiana. His name is usually given as Hāshim b. Ḥakīm, but Ḥakīm is also said to have been his own name, suggesting that some took the underlying Persian form, Hāshim-i Ḥakīm, to mean Hāshim the Sage. Jāḥiẓ (III, pp. 102–103) gives his name as ʿAṭāʾ. Reputed to have come from Balkh, not Sogdiana, Hāshim participated in the ʿAbbāsid revolution and continued to serve as a soldier and secretary in the army at Marw under Abū Dāwūd Khālid b. Ibrāhīm al-Dhuhlī (governor of Khurasan 137–140/755–57), and his successor ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Azdī (140–141/757–58). The language he used as army secretary was presumably Persian, but Jāḥiẓ disparagingly says that he was *alkan* (Ar.), spoke incorrectly with an accent, implying that Muqannaʿ used Arabic too. He is also said to have studied magic and sleights of hand, perhaps a mere inference from his later ability to produce miracles (i.e., illusion tricks), but he was clearly a man of some education.

Revolt

According to the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, Muqannaʿ started prophesying after the downfall of his employer, ʿAbd al-Jabbār, and spent some time in jail in Iraq, but eventually returned to Marw, where he lived in the village of Kāza and worked as a fuller; there he took to preaching again, and also to organizing a movement. When Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba became governor of Khurasan in 151/768–769, he ordered Muqannaʿ arrested, whereupon he went into hiding and later crossed to Transoxania when his followers had taken over some localities for him. It is probably on the basis of this information that the beginning of his *daʿwa* is placed in 151/768–769 in Abū ʾl-Maʿālī. Both Abū ʾl-Maʿālī and the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* mention uprisings in Kish (the modern Shahr-i Sabz, Uzbekistan), especially one in Sūbakh near Nasaf led by one ʿUmar al-Sūbakhī, which should probably be placed around this time. Muqannaʿ now ensconced himself in the mountainous region of Kish called Sinām or Siyām (Barthold, pp. 134–135), where he built a fortress sometimes also called Sinām, though its name appears to have been Nawākith; this castle, and another called Sangard or Sangarda, had been seized for him by his followers, the

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Sapīd-jāmagān (Ar. Mubayyiḍa, lit. "whiteclothed ones"; cf. Ibn al-Athīr, VI, p. 39; Gardīzī, 279.4; both drawing on Sallāmī).

According to Gardīzī, the Sapīd-jāmagān first appeared at Bukhara in 157/773–774; the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* says 159/775–776 (reflecting the common confusion of "sabʿa" and "tisʿa"—in manuscripts dates are usually not written in numbers). Here 157 is probably correct, for both sources place the emergence of the Sapīd-jāmagān before the arrival, in 159, of Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā, the new governor of Samarqand (Ṭabarī, III, p. 459), and Sallāmī, as reflected in Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr, gives a long list of commanders that Muqannaʿ had defeated before Jibraʾīl was sent. The outbreak of the revolt should thus be placed in 157, in the reign of al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–75). It is in the reign of al-Manṣūr that the revolt is placed in a statement credited to al-Faḍl b. Sahl (Ṭabarī, III, p. 773; Ibn al-Athīr, VI, p. 224) and, as regards its first phase, also in the *Tārīkhnāma* (paras. 1–18).

It was only some years later that the movement attracted general attention, however. Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba died in office in 158/774–775 or the following year, shortly before or shortly after the death of the caliph al-Manṣūr (Khalīfa, pp. 676–677, 696), and Muqannaʿ seems to have used the opportunity to conquer Samarqand with the help of the Turkish Khāqān with whom he was allied (*Tārīkhnāma*). Al-Manṣūr or, according to most sources, al-Mahdī (r. 158–169/775–85) now appointed ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yazīd Abū ʿAwn to the governorship of Khurasan and Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā to Samarqand. Jibraʾīl spent the first four months after his arrival, in 159/775–776, fighting Muqannaʿ's followers at Bukhara together with the governor of that city before proceeding to Samarqand (*Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*; Gardīzī, p. 280), which he is said to have reconquered, though it may not have been until 161/777–778 or later, in the governorship of Abū ʿAwn's successor, that he did so. About the same time Muqannaʿ's forces defeated an army sent against him from Balkh at Tirmidh and laid siege to the cities of Chāghāniyān and Nasaf, with an unidentified outcome in the case of Chāghāniyān, but without success at Nasaf (*Tārīkhnāma*). If he never took Nasaf, it must have been at Samarqand that he struck coins (cf. Kochnev). In 161/777–778 al-Mahdī replaced Abū ʿAwn with Muʿādh b. Muslim as governor of Khurasan and assigned a number of commanders to his service, including ʿUqba b. Salm (or b. Muslim) al-Hunāʾī and Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī. Muʿādh also engaged in operations at Bukhara before proceeding to Samarqand, where he joined forces with Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā and reconquered it (for the second time?) from Muqannaʿ's governor, Khārija. Muʿādh then began the operations against Muqannaʿ in Kish (*Tārīkhnāma*; Gardīzī, p. 281; Ibn al-Athīr, VI, p. 51). At some point the supreme command of the war was handed to Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī, with whom Muʿādh is said to have had a disagreement, and in 163/780

Muʿādh was replaced as governor by al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr al-Ḍabbī. It was in the latter's governorship, which lasted until 166/783, that Muqannaʿ was defeated.

Muqannaʿ's stronghold was a double fortress in a famously inaccessible site. There was cultivated land within the walls of the outer fortress, and Muqannaʿ is said to have prepared for the siege by stocking up on food (Ṭabarī, III, p. 484); but Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī stayed at the fortress "summer and winter" (*Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, p. 72/101 = 74) and kept the siege going for long enough to reduce the inhabitants of the fortress to starvation, so that his commanders surrendered in return for safe conduct (Gardīzī, p. 282; Ibn al-Athīr, VI, p. 51; *Tārīkhnāma*, paras. 19–20). Muqannaʿ committed suicide when the outer fortress fell. He is widely said to have burnt himself, allegedly by throwing himself into a hearth, and to have disappeared without a trace (e.g., Abū ʾl-Maʿālī; *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*; Isfarāʾinī). Since he was also said to have killed all his wives and retainers first, so that nobody could know what had happened, a story was told of a woman who had feigned death and watched him kill everybody, including himself, as the only witness to the events. In most versions (cf. *Tārīkhnāma*, paras. 19, 22, and commentary) she opens the gate as well. (The story of this woman, found in most Persian sources, never seems to have reached the Arabic-speaking world.) Muqannaʿ's disappearance without a trace was meant to prove his claim to divinity (Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 211); his followers took him to have been raised to heaven, as other sources say. His enemies duly denied that he had disappeared, insisting that his body had been found and his head cut off and sent to al-Mahdī.

Muqannaʿ's death is usually placed in 163/780, which tallies with the date given for the journey to the Byzantine border and Jerusalem on which al-Mahdī is said to have received the news (e.g., Ṭabarī, III, pp. 494, 498–499). In the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (p. 64/90 = 65), however, the date is 167/783–784, which reappears as 169/785 in al-Bīrūnī (*Āthār*, p. 211)—thanks to the confusion of "sabʿa" and "tisʿa" in writing again. Since Muqannaʿ is said to have been defeated in the governorship of al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr, 169 is impossible. The corrupt date must have taken on a life of its own, however, for in Gardīzī (p. 155) al-Mahdī dies after receiving the news, implying that it happened in 169. Sallāmī (quoted in Nasafī, no. 287, s.v. "Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī") places the victory in 166/782. The same year, or the very beginning of 167, is also implied by Gardīzī (pp. 282–283), and 166 appears in Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī (p. 299) as well. Since it was in 166 that the Bukhār Khudā, who had sympathized with the rebels, was assassinated by the caliph (*Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, pp. 9/14–15 = 10–11), Ṣadīqī (p. 179, Fr.; pp. 223–224, Pers.) places the end of the revolt in 166. This would indeed seem the best date if a good explanation could be found for the association of

the victory and al-Mahdī's journey to the Byzantine border, or, alternatively, if the caliph's journey could be redated (cf. Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, p. 480). As things stand, no verdict seems to be possible.

Message

All accounts of Muqannaʿ's message appear to go back to a certain Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, known to Ibn al-Nadīm (p. 408) as "learned about the *Muslimiyya*" and quoted (without patronymic) as an authority on Muqannaʿ in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*. According to the earliest version, found in the Ismāʿīlī heresiography by Abū Tammām (pp. 76–79, Ar., and 74–77, Eng.), Muqannaʿ's followers held that the divine spirit would every now and again enter the body of a man whom God wished to act as His messenger; the messenger was charged with informing other human beings how God wished them to behave. His spirit had entered Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad, and Abū Muslim Khurāsānī, returning to His throne in between each incarnation, and it had also been incarnate in Muqannaʿ, who was the Mahdī and thus by implication the last of them, though his followers had come to await another incarnation by the time this was recorded. This was a doctrine of periodic *ḥulūl*, manifestation of God in man, not of metempsychosis, though it is often called *tanāsukh*. Abū Muslim's appearance in the scheme is probably a mistake. Muqannaʿ certainly cast himself as an avenger of Abū Muslim, and perhaps of Yaḥyā b. Zayd as well; and he may well have deified Abū Muslim as a prophet or king, as he held God's spirit to have been incarnate in both (Thaʿālibī, p. 37). But it is hard to see the point of two messengers in immediate succession, and the sectarians explicitly said that there were long intervals between them; moreover, as the last Muqannaʿ was undoubtedly meant to be the seventh.

God was held to manifest Himself in human beings because He was not otherwise accessible to them (Isfarāʾinī), but even his human manifestation was more than humans could bear: it was to shield his followers from his divine radiance that Muqannaʿ wore a veil (explained by his enemies as designed to hide his ugliness). His veil was of green silk (Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, p. 211) or golden (Gardīzī, 278.5) and clearly meant to recall the garments of green silk and heavy brocade that the believers will wear in Paradise (Q. 18:31; cf. the explicit explanation of the green silken shirt that Bihāfarīdh brought back from heaven as the clothing of Paradise in al-Thaʿālibī cited in Houtsma, pp. 33, Ar., and 34, Ger.). Abū ʾl-Maʿālī and Isfarāʾinī connect Muqannaʿ's veil with the story of Moses as told in the Quran, but the parallels are strained because the Quran does not mention the veil that Moses was said to have worn when he descended

from Sinai to hide the radiance that his face had acquired when he spoke with God (Bible, Exod. 34:29–35). If the Mosaic parallel was adduced by Muqannaʿ himself or his followers, they would seem to have read the Quran in the light of Jewish or Christian traditions.

It is hard to avoid the impression that Buddhist beliefs are lurking in the background too. The Buddhists operated with the idea of a plurality of Buddhas, all of whom preached the same message and one of whom, Maitreya, was a savior still to come: he would appear at a time when things had gone from bad to worse to inaugurate a period on bliss on earth. Maitreya was extremely popular in Central Asia, not just among Buddhists, but also among Manicheans, who identified him with Jesus the Splendor as well as Mani himself. At Bāmiyān and elsewhere Maitreya is depicted with features borrowed from depictions of Sasanian kings, and he was envisaged as enormously big and glittering (Abegg, pp. 15, 24; Scott, pp. 51–52, 61).

That Maitreya played a role in Muqannaʿ's conception of himself is suggested by the claim that he burnt himself (full discussion in Crone, 2012, p. 133). Of Maitreya we are told that he would enter Parinirvana with fire emanating from his body when his mission was over: he would disappear in flames as a cone of fire, surrounded by pupils, and be extinguished as a flame for lack of fuel (Abegg, pp. 15, 25). This was how Muqannaʿ disappeared, except that his enemies insisted that nobody was present when he died and/or that his body had in fact been found. Further, Muqannaʿ's miracles included a famous moon, which he is said to have produced by means of quicksilver in a well. This does not have any Islamic, Christian, or Jewish meaning, but Mahāyana Buddhists commonly illustrated the doctrine of *śunyatā* (Sk. "emptiness", i.e., to the effect that all things are non-existent) by comparing the Buddha's career to something seen in a dream or a mirage, and the Khotanese *Book of Zambasta* further compares it to "a moon reflected in water" (6:52). This suggests that Muqannaʿ's moon was meant to evoke the dependent nature of the phenomenal world and/or his Buddha status, and that its unreal nature was an intrinsic part of the message.

All in all, Muqannaʿ seems to have cast himself as a divine being who had come to wreak vengeance on the tyrants who had killed local heroes such as Abū Muslim and Yaḥyā b. Zayd and who would inaugurate a final era of paradisical bliss on earth for a Sogdian community of believers familiar with concepts from a variety of religious traditions. If he was indeed playing the Maitreya Buddha, the Turkish Khāqān with whom he was allied presumably cast himself as the righteous king who would welcome Maitreya (Ch'en, p. 428).

On one occasion, we are told, Muqannaʿ removed his veil (*Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, pp. 72/101–102 = 75; Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, pp. 59–60). This was a great messianic event, a theophany which abolished all restraints in the relations between his followers

and members of other religious communities: "The lives, possessions, and children of anyone who does not join me are lawful to you," as the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* presents him as declaring on this occasion. The free hand that he allowed his followers in their dealing with their enemies was misunderstood as a doctrine of free use of women and property among the followers themselves, and it was on this basis that al-Bīrūnī (*Āthār*, p. 211) held Muqannaʿ to have prescribed everything that Mazdak had laid down. There is no trace of Mazdakism in anything Muqannaʿ is on record as having said.

Sogdiana had not formed part of the Sasanian empire, and there is no suggestion of Sasanian restorationism in anything remembered about Muqannaʿ either. He is not credited with plans to bring down the caliphate. But he clearly wanted to eliminate Islam as a political force in Sogdiana, and he probably branded all Muslims who wished to remain under caliphal rule as "Arabs," singling out the Arab invaders of Sogdiana as the source of his troubles. The *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (p. 65/92 = 67) stresses the Arab identity of some victims of the revolt. It also tells us that Muqannaʿ's own father-in-law was an Arab from Marw who worked as a missionary (Ar. *dāʿī*) for him, clearly because it was shocking. A story in the *Tārīkhnāma* (para. 23 and commentary) depicts Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī as capturing this man, here cast as a descendant of a Qurashī ally of Muʿāwiya (d. 64/683), and spitting him in his face, telling him that he was an even worse traitor to Islam than his ancestor.

Followers

Muqannaʿ's Arab father-in-law notwithstanding, Muqannaʿ's followers were mostly Sogdians. Judging from their names, some of them were ex-Muslims like himself, that is to say, men who, disappointed with their experience as members of the Muslim community, hoped to create a Sogdian polity of their own based on a nativized creed, which they may well have regarded as true Islam: thus ʿUmar Sūbakhī, Ḥakīm-i Aḥmad (also known as Ḥakīm-i Bukhārī), and perhaps also Khārija. Most bear non-Muslim names, however: Bāghī, *Krdk*, *Qyrm/Qtwm*, *Ḥjmy*, *Ḥjdān*, *Kwshwy*, and *Srjma*. In social terms they were mostly villagers. In the *Tārīkhnāma* both they and their opponents include *dihqān*s, in the apparent sense of village headmen. If the village headman sided with Muqannaʿ, the entire village would presumably do so, willingly or unwillingly. One passage in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (pp. 66–67/94 = 68) identifies a clutch of rebel leaders at Bukhara as strongmen/brigands (sing. *ʿayyār*), fighters (sing. *mubāriz*), pickpockets (sing. *ṭarrār*), and runners (sing. *dawanda*), clearly in a disparaging vein, but the rebels may well have included such men. The Bukhār

Khudā, whose dynasty had been reduced to puppet status by the Muslims, was said also to have sympathized with the movement, and the same may have been true of his counterpart at Samarqand, the *ikhshīd* and nominal king of Sogdiana (Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, p. 479, where he submits to al-Mahdī, implying that he had rebelled), but there is no mention of the ruler or rulers of Kish and Nasaf.

In so far as the rebels were not Sogdians, they were Turks. The Turkish leader who conquered Samarqand for Muqannaʿ is identified as the Khāqān, king of Sogdiana. The *Tārīkhnāma* later mentions a Turkish chief, probably the same man, by the name of *Khlkh/Khlj* Khāqān, who had a dispute with an ally called Kayyāk/Kayyāl Ghūrī, while the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* mentions one Kūlār Tekīn. The identity of these Turks is problematic. Sallāmī (as cited by Ibn al-Athīr, VI, 39; Gardīzī, p. 279) merely identifies them as infidel Turks. In connection with the Saljuqs, however, Ibn al-Athīr (XI, p. 178, year 548) cites an earlier historian of Khurasan according to whom they were Ghuzz who had crossed into Transoxania in the reign of al-Mahdī and converted to Islam: when things went badly for Muqannaʿ they betrayed him, as was their wont. This is meant to illustrate the unreliability of the Ghuzz who had flooded the Muslim world by then, and Muqannaʿ's Turks may simply be cast as Ghuzz for that purpose. *Khlj* Khāqān suggests a chief of the Khalaj Turks of southeastern Iran. Al-Baghdādī (pp. 243–244) says that Muqannaʿ's Turks were *al-atrāk al-khalajiyya*. If Ghūrī is an Arabic *nisba*, Khalaj Khāqān's companion Kayyāk could be a Khalaj from Ghūr. This would fit the information that Muqannaʿ came from Balkh in that he could have established connections with the Khalaj there. But the imperial title of *khāqān* is not attested for the Khalaj, and the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (p. 66/93 = 68) followed by Abū ʾl-Maʿālī (p. 59) says that the Turks came from Turkestan. This suggests that the chief's name should be read as Khallukh Khāqān, and Baghdādī's *khalajiyya* as *khallukhiyya*: Khallukh is the Persian transcription of Qarluq. The Qarluq were the dominant Turkish power in Central Asia after the collapse of the western khaqanate. The imperial title of *khāqān* is a problem again, however, for the Qarluq had not adopted it yet. Their chief appears as *yabghu* in the list of rulers who submitted to al-Mahdī (Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, p. 479). One would have expected Muqannaʿ's allies to be or include former Turgesh. It was a chief of this confederation who had borne the title of *khāqān*, who had been overlord of Sogdiana before the arrival of the Muslims, and who had been forced to submit to the Qarluq in 766. If the Khāqān who conquered Samarqand was a Qarluq from Turkestan, he could have acted as leader of the Qarluq splinter groups in Transoxania and laid claim to the Turgesh heritage, including the imperial title, in an attempt to assert his position against the Muslims and the *yabghu* of the main body of Qarluq alike. This would have secured him the support of former Turgesh in the region, whatever name they

were known by now. Kayyāk Ghūrī could perhaps be a chief from the Balkh region, or, alternatively reading Ghūzī, a leader of outriding bands of Ghuzz in Transoxania. We know that there had been support among the Turks of Transoxania for Isḥāq, the soldier who had preached a message related to Muqannaʿ's after Abū Muslim's death; and we later hear of the Sapīd-jāmagān in Īlāq, Shāsh, Khujand, Farghāna, and Kāsān (Niẓām al-Mulk, chap. 46.22; Shahrastānī, 1, p. 194). Al-Baghdādī (p. 243) credits their presence in Īlāq to Muqannaʿ. They are more likely to predate him, for Buddhist adherents of the Maitreya Buddha were known to the Chinese as "the whiteclothed ones" (Seiwert and Ma, pp. 151–155; full discussion in Crone, 2012, chap. 6). As devotees of Maitreya or a comparable redeemer figure identified with him, they would have been receptive to Muqannaʿ's message, however. That Muqannaʿ's Khāqān came from this region is supported by the mention, in some manuscripts of the *Tārīkhnāma*, of the title "King of the Turks and Farghāna" (see Crone and Jafari, para. 1.5n; compare Muqannaʿ as the Khāqān in 2.1 and the confusion over who bore the title King of Sogdiana in 1.5n, 2.2, 3.1n, 4.1). If Muqannaʿ's Turks were mainly Transoxanian Qarluqs and former Turgesh claiming the position once held by the Turgesh, it will not just have been for the plunder, but also for his messianic message that they, or some of them, joined him.

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CHAPTER 5

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Abū Tammām on the Mubayyiḍa[1]

In 1998 Wilferd Madelung and Paul Walker published a heresiographical chapter from a work by Abū Tammām, an Ismaili missionary active in the first half of the fourth/tenth century.[2] The section on the anthropomorphists in this heresiography includes an important account of the beliefs of the 'White-clothed ones' (Mubayyiḍa), identified as the followers of al-Muqannaʿ. In what follows, I examine this account, discussing its provenance, the light it throws on the beliefs of the sectarians in question and its importance for the later heresiographical tradition. Its importance is indicated by the fact that now that we have Abū Tammām's text, the testimonies of al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), al-Isfarā'inī (d. 471/1027) and al-Shahrastānī (d. 54/1153) can be discarded.

Abū Tammām's account falls into three distinct parts based on different sources. As will be seen, the third part reappears in slightly different forms in *al-Bad' wa'l-ta'rīkh* by the Muʿtazilī al-Maqdisī (wr. 355/966), as well as in the additions made to Narshakhī's *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (compiled in Arabic in 332/943, but now lost) by Qubāwī when he translated it into Persian (in 522/1128), while both the first and the third part seem to have been known to al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) and al-Isfarā'inī (d. 471/1027). All these scholars were non-Ismailis, or even enemies of Ismailism. Are we to envisage them as sharing a source with Abū Tammām or did they draw on Abū Tammām himself? At first sight, the former possibility seems the more likely. Who, in that case, might the shared source have been? An obvious guess would be Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319/931), also known as al-Kaʿbī, a Muʿtazilī theologian and heresiographer, whose *Maqālāt* the editors hold to be the main source behind Abū Tammām's heresiography as a whole.[3] But in fact, al-Balkhī does not seem to
168 be the source for the | Mubayyiḍa. Unfortunately, it is not possible to say for

1 I should like to thank Michael Cook for his most useful comments on this chapter.

2 Wilferd Madelung and Paul E. Walker, ed. and tr., *An Ismaili Heresiography: The 'Bāb al-shayṭān' from Abū Tammām's* Kitāb al-shajara (Leiden, 1998), 76–79 = 74–77. In what follows, I use their translation, but not always exactly as it stands. Where figures are given in the form 107 = 57, the first figure refers to the text and the second to the translation.

3 Madelung and Walker, *Heresiography*, pp. 10 ff. Van Ess suggests that Abū Tammām's source might be al-Nāshi' al-Aṣghar, though the latter died in 365/975 or 366/976, after Abū Tammām's presumed floruit (Josef van Ess, 'Le *miʿrāǧ* et la vision de Dieu', in Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, ed., *Le voyage initiatique en terre d'islam*, Louvain and Paris, 1996, pp. 27–56).

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sure, for although two manuscripts of al-Balkhī's *Maqālāt* are extant and under preparation for publication in Jordan, they are not publicly accessible. However, Hüseyin Hansu, a specialist in al-Balkhī who has seen these manuscripts, kindly tells me that he does not recall encountering the Mubayyiḍa in them and that there is no entry on them in the table of contents, of which he has a copy. Further, neither al-Ashʿarī nor Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, who made extensive use of al-Balkhī's *Maqālāt*, mentions al-Muqannaʿ or the Mubayyiḍa. Nashwān does quote al-Balkhī as making a passing comment on sectarians of the same type as the Mubayyiḍa, but the comment does not fit Abū Tammām's account.[4] In addition, Abū Tammām's opening paragraph would seem to rule out the possibility that he was drawing on al-Balkhī (see below, Part I (a)); and finally, the first authors outside Khurāsān to discuss al-Muqannaʿ's doctrine, as opposed to his revolt, appear to be al-Maqdisī and al-Baghdādī, the very authors who share information with Abū Tammām. Since Abū Tammām was certainly known in Iraq, and apparently read there too, if not always with relish,[5] the most economical solution is that the non-Ismaili scholars were drawing directly or indirectly on Abū Tammām himself.

Part I

(a) *God and His Messengers* (*Madelung and Walker, 76f. = 74–76*)

Abū Tammām starts by telling us that the Mubayyiḍa are the followers of al-Muqannaʿ (d. probably 163/779), of whom he observes that he claimed to be the Mahdī and that his real name was Hishām (not, as more commonly said, Hāshim) b. Ḥakīm al-Marwazī. This is all he says about al-Muqannaʿ himself. Of the Mubayyiḍa, however, he tells us that in their view, 'God is a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*) with length, breadth and depth', and 'all of the prophets are gods whose bodies are the messengers of God and whose spirits are God himself' (*inna 'l-rusul kullahum āliha ajsāduhum rusul Allāh wa-arwāḥuhum nafsuhu*). 'Whenever God wants to speak to corporeal creatures, He enters the form (*ṣūra*) of one of them and makes that person a messenger to them, so that the latter

4 Cf. below, notes 32 f.

5 Al-Ḥarīrī/Jarīrī mentions him in his famous outburst against attempts to combine *sharīʿa* and *falsafa*, characterising him as a Shiʿi and briefly identifying his approach as having been similar to that of his contemporaries, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ and Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934); see Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa'l-muʾānasa*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn and Aḥmad Zayn (Beirut, 1939–1944), vol. 2, p. 15. My thanks to Omar Alí-de-Unzaga for reminding me of this passage.

may order them (to do) what He desires and wants, and forbid them (to do) what He does not want and what He is angered by.' In support of this view, the Mubayyiḍa will adduce Sura 53. Further, they say that God will only incarnate Himself at long intervals. He entered Adam when He created Him, then caused him to die and returned to His throne in the heavens. Later He created Noah and descended into his form, to return to His throne when he died.

169 The same happened with Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad, Abū Muslim and al-Muqannaʿ. Of each one of them we are told that first God descended into his form (*ṣūra*), then He caused him to die (*qabaḍahu*) and returned to His throne. Now the Mubayyiḍa are expecting His (God's, not al-Muqannaʿ's) return and incarnation (*ḥulūl*) in the form that they are waiting for, so that He may make their religion manifest.

There are several new points here. That al-Muqannaʿ claimed to be the Mahdī is not mentioned elsewhere, but certainly fits in with what we know about him. One is more surprised to learn that the Mubayyiḍa described God as a subtle, three-dimensional body (*jism*), if only because it takes us into the technical language of *kalām*. The Mubayyiḍa normally come across as uneducated villagers. Of course, they could have had *mutakallim*s, but the fact that al-Muqannaʿ's name is given as Hishām is suspicious: the Shiʿi *mutakallim* Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. ca. 185/800) is well known to have held that God was a three-dimensional body.[6] Did the author of this section confuse Hāshim b. al-Ḥakīm with Hishām b. al-Ḥakam? If so, he cannot be al-Balkhī, or for that matter Abū Tammām himself.[7]

The view that God's spirit incarnates itself in the human bodies (*ajsād*) of messengers, identified as bearers of God's commands, is familiar from other accounts of al-Muqannaʿ, but it is stated here with unexpected precision, and this is the first time we learn that the Mubayyiḍa would invoke the Qurʾan in its support.[8] Sura 53 famously describes a vision of a divine being, sometimes taken to be an angel and sometimes God, and the Mubayyiḍa took it to describe the very act of incarnation: when the Qurʾan says that the one *terrible in power*

6 Cf. al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Istanbul, 1929–1933), pp. 31 f.; translated with further references in Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra* (Berlin and New York, 1991–1997), v, pp. 72 f.; discussed at i, pp. 358 ff.

7 Abū Tammām was well informed about Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, whose position he reports in a long section on the Hishāmiyya (Madelung and Walker, *Heresiography*, 56 = 59).

8 Later sources, however, know the Mubayyiḍa to have adduced God's command to the angels to worship Adam as proof of Adam's divinity; see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut, 1978), vol. 3, p. 263; Mīrkhwānd, *Tārīkh-i rawḍat al-ṣafāʾ*, ed. Jamshīd Kiyānfar (Tehran, 1380 Sh./2001), vol. 3, p. 2573.

and very strong stood poised, then drew near and *let himself down*, to stand *two bows length away*, they understood it as saying that the divine being came to be closer to Muḥammad than his own brain and heart; and when the Sura continues that the divine being *revealed to him what he revealed*, they held it to mean that it inspired (*alhama*) Muḥammad to the point of entering his form (*dakhala fī ṣūratihi*).

The names of the men in whom God had manifested Himself according to al-Muqannaʿ are also familiar from other sources.[9] It is often called a doctrine of *tanāsukh*,[10] but what is being postulated is a doctrine of periodic divine incarnation, not of the migration of souls, or of the spirit of God, from one body to another: God returns to His throne after each incarnation, and the spirit always goes directly from Him to the human being selected. The Mubayyiḍa may well have believed in the transmigration of human souls as well, but on that subject our account is silent.

The men in whom God incarnates Himself are identified as messengers 170
and implicitly seen as bringing a new revelation. The first six—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad—are unproblematic. One expects al-Muqannaʿ to appear as the seventh and last, presiding over the end of times as the Mahdī. Instead, the seventh incarnation is Abū Muslim, with al-Muqannaʿ as the eighth. ʿAlī is not in the sequence, nor would one expect him to be, but one would not expect Abū Muslim to be in it either. Why should al-Muqannaʿ have cast Abū Muslim as a bringer of new revelation, only to abrogate it straightaway as the bringer of a new one himself? The Mubayyiḍa explicitly said that there were long periods in between the divine incarnations.

There is, of course, no reason to doubt that Abū Muslim mattered greatly in al-Muqannaʿ's preaching. An undated coin from eighth-century Transoxiana

9 The complete list is given in Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, Persian tr. Abū Naṣr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Naṣr al-Qubāwī (d. 522/1128), ed. Charles Schefer (Paris, 1892), pp. 64 f.; ed. Muḥammad Taqī Mudarris Raḍawī (Tehran, 1351 Sh./1972), p. 91; tr. Richard N. Frye, *The History of Bukhara* (Cambridge, MA, 1954), p. 66; Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, *Bayān al-adyān*, ed. Hāshim Raḍī (Tehran, 1342 Sh./1964), p. 58; Gardīzī, *Tārīkh-i Gardīzī*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Tehran, 1363 Sh./1984), p. 278, the last with some of the same wording as in Abū Tammām. Many others have the list in an abbreviated form. For divergent versions, see below, Part III (b).

10 For the earliest examples, see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Bayān waʾl-tabyīn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (2nd ed., Cairo, 1380/1960–1961), vol. 3, pp. 102 f.; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje et al. (Leiden, 1879–1901), vol. 3, p. 484; al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-Badʾ waʾl-taʾrīkh*, ed. and French tr. Clément Huart as *Le livre de la création et de l'histoire* (Paris, 1899–1919), vol. 6, p. 97.

identifies itself as struck by 'Hāshim, *wly Abā Muslim*', presumably to be read *walī Abī Muslim* ('Abū Muslim's friend/avenger', as the editor reads it, without discussing the unexpected accusative).[11] This Hāshim must be al-Muqannaʿ, who was known in some circles to have preached vengeance for Abū Muslim,[12] though Ibn Ḥazm seems to be the only heresiographer to mention it.[13] Al-Muqannaʿ undoubtedly regarded Abū Muslim as divine as well. According to al-Thaʿālibī, he held the divine spirit to manifest itself in prophets and kings alike, including Abū Muslim,[14] and Abū Muslim was a prophet according to the Rāwandiyya, who deified the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775) as the seventh and last imam.[15] Not every prophet or king was an inaugurator of a new cycle, however. Abū Muslim appears in all complete versions of al-Muqannaʿ's sequence of divine messengers, but the chances are that they all go back to a single source. Al-Baghdādī undoubtedly has his version from Abū Tammām, for he too gives al-Muqannaʿ's name as Hishām.[16] Most probably, then, Abū Muslim should be removed from the list.

It is of course also possible that it is al-Muqannaʿ himself who should be removed: he could have believed Abū Muslim to be the seventh and the last. This would fit the information in Ibn al-Athīr and Mīrkhwānd (ultimately perhaps from Sallāmī)[17] that al-Muqannaʿ regarded Abū Muslim as more meritorious than Muḥammad: the import would be that Abū Muslim had brought the final revelation.[18] In this interpretation, al-Muqannaʿ would have been Abū Muslim's *walī* and successor, still divine perhaps, but not the bringer of a new revelation, and not the Mahdī either, merely the imam and executor of Abū Muslim's abrogation of Muḥammad's revelation. But the information in Ibn

11 Boris Kochnev, 'Les monnaies de Muqannaʿ', *Studia Iranica*, 30 (2001), pp. 143–150.

12 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 3, p. 773; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ʾl-taʾrīkh*, ed. Carl Johan Tornberg (Beirut, 1965–1967), vol. 6, p. 224 (year 193); Muḥammad b. ʿAbdūs al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarāʾ waʾl-kuttāb*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā et al. (Cairo, 1938), p. 277 ult.

13 Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Faṣl fī ʾl-milal waʾl-ahwāʾ waʾl-niḥal* (Cairo, 1317–1321/1899–1903), vol. 4, p. 187.

14 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, ed. Jalīl al-ʿAṭiyya (Beirut, 1990), p. 37 (drawn to my attention by Hassan Ansari); for further discussion, see Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (New York, 2012), ch. 6.

15 Al-Nawbakhtī, *Kitāb Firaq al-Shīʿa*, ed. Helmut Ritter (Istanbul, 1931), p. 47; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī taʾrīkh al-mulūk waʾl-umam*, ed. Fritz Krenkow (Hyderabad, 1357–1362/1938–1943); ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭāʾ and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭāʾ (Beirut, 1992), vol. 8, pp. 29 f. (year 141).

16 Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Badr (Cairo, 1328/1910), p. 243 ult.

17 C. Edmund Bosworth, 'al-Sallāmī', *EI2*, vol. 8, p. 996.

18 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. 6, p. 39 (year 159); Mīrkhwānd, *Tārīkh-i rawḍat al-ṣafāʾ*, vol. 3, p. 2573.

al-Athīr and others is plucked from an unknown | context, and the sources 171
are more likely to have misunderstood the role of Abū Muslim, about whom many widely different claims were made at the time, than that of al-Muqanna' himself. That they did in fact misunderstand the role of Abū Muslim in al-Muqanna''s system is suggested by the information given in Abū Tammām's Part III (b), as will be seen.

Abū Tammām's account of the divine incarnations is unsophisticated: God actually leaves His throne in order to incarnate Himself in a human body. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya was later to say the same in connection with the Christian doctrine of divine incarnation, presumably to highlight the absurdity of the claim.[19] Even so, Abū Tammām's account is interesting, but a full treatment of its implications must await another publication.

(b) ***Laws and Customs* (*Madelung and Walker, 77 = 76*)**

By way of conclusion to the first section Abū Tammām tells us something about the laws of the Mubayyiḍa: they do not believe in exclusive sexual access to women, but hold them to be lawful for all of them (*istaḥallū fīmā baynahum al-nisā'*); and they also deem it lawful to eat carrion, blood, pork and other things,[20] claiming that God did not prohibit such things; rather, the words for the things seemingly prohibited are the names of men with whom it was forbidden to have social and political relations (*walāya*); conversely, the religious obligations (*farā'iḍ*) were simply cover names for men with whom it is obligatory to have *walāya*. The identity of the men in question is not disclosed. Again, however, we are given snippets of their interpretation of the Qur'an. They would adduce Q. 5:93: *there is no fault in those who believe and do deeds of righteousness for what they ate*, and Q. 7:32: *who has forbidden the beautiful things* (*zīna*) *of God which He brought forth for His servants and the good things of sustenance* (*al-ṭayyibāt min al-rizq*)?

That the Mubayyiḍa rejected the idea of exclusive marital rights over women is what we are commonly told about all the sectarians subsumed under the label of Khurramīs. I shall come back to it below (Part II (a)). As regards their views on food, Abū Tammām's passage is notable for not mentioning vegetarianism, or more precisely the prohibition of killing living beings, which is

19 Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, 'Some Neglected Aspects of Medieval Muslim Polemics against Christianity', *Harvard Theological Review*, 89 (1996), p. 81, with reference to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā*, ed. Sayf al-Din al-Kātib (Beirut, n.d.), p. 191.

20 Reproduced in al-Isfarā'inī, *al-Tabṣīr fī 'l-dīn wa-tamyīz al-firqa al-nājiya 'an al-firaq al-hālikin*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (Beirut, 1983), 132.4 (*yastaḥillūna akl al-mayta wa'l-khinzīr*).

attested for Mazdak and the western Khurramīs alike, but it should perhaps be seen as implied by the permission to eat carrion. At all events, the permission was not academic. Al-Masʿūdī had seen 'a kind of Mazdakī Zoroastrians who have a village outside Rayy inhabited only by them'; when cattle died in Rayy or Qazwīn, one of them would come with his ox, load the dead animal on to it,
172 and take it back | to their village, where they would eat it; most of their food, and indeed of their cattle, was fresh or dried meat of such animals, and they would use their bones in the construction of buildings.[21] They must have been skilled in the art of judging what was and was not fit for consumption, and how to cook it, for this to be possible. That the 'Mazdakīs' in the countryside of Rayy would eat carrion is also mentioned in a letter by Maḥmūd of Ghazna (d. 421/1030) to the caliph al-Qādir biʾllāh (r. 381–422/991–1031) in 420/1029.[22]

The allegorical interpretation of the dietary (and, one assumes, sexual) laws of the Qurʾan and the term *walāya* are interesting for sounding vaguely Shiʿi. The same interpretation is reported for other *ghulāt*, and all the reports may originate in one and the same source, which was not necessarily concerned with the Mubayyiḍa.[23] However this may be, there is no indication in this material that the Mubayyiḍa were Shiʿis in the broad sense of being concerned with ʿAlī and the Prophet's family. One tends to think of them as such because it was in Shiʿism that the idea of periodic manifestation of the deity was to surface as a Muslim phenomenon, along with features such as Mahdism, antinomianism (or anomianism), and allegorical interpretation of the scripture. All these features are present here, but it is with reference to Muḥammad and the Qurʾan that the Mubayyiḍa are trying to Islamise them, not ʿAlī or the imamate.

(c) *Overall Assessment*

Leaving aside the apparent confusion with Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and the inclusion of Abū Muslim in the list of divine incarnations, Part I is a well-informed account by an author who may have been a Transoxianan himself. He seems to have taken an interest in sectarian use of the Qurʾan, and since Qurʾanic interpretations are quoted both at the beginning and at the end of the section, he is likely to be responsible for all of it. Unfortunately, he cannot be securely iden-

21 Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab, wa-maʿādin al-jawhar*, ed. Charles Pellat (Beirut, 1966–1979), vol. 2, § 868; ed. and French tr. Charles Barbier de Meynard and Abel Pavet de Courteille as *Les prairies d'or* (Paris, 1861–1877), vol. 3, p. 27.

22 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, Hyderabad ed., vol. 8, pp. 39 f. (year 420).

23 Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, pp. 6, 10, on the followers of ʿAbd Allāh b. Muʿāwiya and the Manṣūriyya, in similar wording and Q. 5:93 (but without 7:32); al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa*, pp. 38, 39, on the Khaṭṭābiyya, in different wording and Q. 4:28 (not adduced by the Mubayyiḍa).

tified. Al-Bīrūnī mentions Persian accounts (*akhbār*) of al-Muqannaʿ which he had translated into Arabic in his lost *Akhbār al-Mubayyiḍa wa'l-Qarāmiṭa*, but exactly what he translated is hard to tell.[24] If we take al-Bīrūnī to be referring to a book called *Akhbār al-Muqannaʿ*, the work he translated was perhaps the *Akhbār al-Muqannaʿ* by a certain Ibrāhīm which is cited as a source in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*.[25] This fits the fact that al-Bīrūnī shares a source with the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* in his *Āthār*.[26] The Ibrāhīm in question is probably Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, known to Ibn al-Nadīm as an authority on Isḥāq al-Turk. Ibn al-Nadīm says that he was 'learned about the Muslimiyya'.[27] This Ibrāhīm is most | likely to have written in Arabic, but his work could have been translated 173
into Persian by the time al-Bīrūnī read it and translated it (back?) into Arabic. Unfortunately, however, Ibrāhīm's book is also lost and he himself is otherwise unknown.[28] Ibn al-Nadīm knew of him only because he had read an apparently anonymous history of Transoxiana[29] which does not seem to have been widely disseminated.[30] But if Ibrāhīm is the source behind both the *Tārikh-i Bukhārā* and Part I of Abū Tammām, all the extant lists of the divine incarnations in al-Muqannaʿ's system go back to him.[31]

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24 Al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiya ʿan al-qurūn al-khāliya*, ed. Eduard Sachau (Leipzig, 1878, repr. 1923), p. 211; tr. Eduard Sachau as *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* (London, 1879).

25 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, ed. Schefer, pp. 64, 72; ed. Raḍawī, pp. 90, 101; tr. Frye, pp. 65, 74. This was first suggested by Gholam Hossein Sadighi, Persian tr. as *Junbishhā-yi dīnī-yi Irānī dar qarnhā-yi duwwum wa siwwum-i hijrī* (Tehran, 1372/1993), p. 210 (originally published in French as *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au IIe et au IIIe siècle de l'hégire* in Paris, 1938); similarly Tūraj Tābān, 'Qiyām-i Muqannaʿ', *Īrān Shināsī*, 1 (1989), p. 533; see also M. Rawshan's notes to his edition of the Persian translation by Balʿamī of Ṭabarī's *Taʾrīkh*, *Tārīkhnāma-yi Ṭabarī*, Persian tr. attributed to Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad Balʿamī (d. 363/974), ed. Muḥammad Rawshan (Tehran, 1366 Sh./1987), vol. 3, p. 1593.

26 Both give the duration of al-Muqannaʿ's revolt as fourteen years, and both have an unusual date for the end of the revolt which is probably one and the same: the year 167AH in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, ibid., and 169AH in Bīrūnī's *Āthār*, p. 211. Examples of *sabʿa* being read as *tisʿa* are legion.

27 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 408.

28 Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 3, pp. 652, 654, 1809, cites two authorities by the name of Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, but they are reporting different kinds of events and unlikely to be relevant.

29 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 408. He refers to the author as *ṣāḥib Kitāb Akhbār Mā Warāʾ al-Nahr min Khurāsān*; cf. *ḥākī hādhā 'l-khabar* a few lines above. One suspects that the manuscript had lost its frontispiece.

30 Isḥāq al-Turk is known only from Ibn al-Nadīm.

31 Both Abū 'l-Maʿālī and Gardīzī (above, note 9) are clearly dependent on Narshakhī.

Part II

(a) *First-Hand Observations* (*Madelung and Walker, 77f. = 76f.*)

Abū Tammām continues with a section written in the first person singular, starting 'I have seen a great number of them and have disputed with them.' One assumes this to be Abū Tammām speaking, but it cannot be taken for granted since mediaeval authors would readily copy statements in the first person singular from other sources. Whoever he is, the speaker proceeds to report that

> none of them has much understanding of any of the principles of their faith nor are they acquainted with al-Muqannaʿ and his era, except the learned among them. All there is to it is neglect of prayer, fasting and washing for major ritual impurity. They practise dissimulation and do not admit outsiders into their ranks or intermarry with them, though they live interspersed with Muslims.

To some extent, all this is in accordance with expectation: that the Khurramīs and related sectarians ignored the ritual precepts of Islam is widely stated in other sources, and it fits the information on the sexual and dietary habits of the Mubayyiḍa in Part I. That they practised dissimulation is also widely noted, and their refusal to intermarry with outsiders makes sense. But in Part I al-Muqannaʿ figures prominently in their religious system; here, they do not remember him, except for the learned among them. How is this to be explained?

If the same author is responsible for Parts I and II, he could simply be describing the views of the learned in Part I and the ignorant laity in Part II; but al-Muqannaʿ can hardly have been crucial to the religious leaders without the laity knowing about him too. More probably, Part I is excerpted from an earlier source, the putative Ibrāhīm, whereas Part II is based on the author's personal
174 observations. Who was the author? | If he is al-Balkhī, he would have made his observations in the region of Balkh and added them to an account of al-Muqannaʿ's followers on the assumption that all sectarians of this type were the same: if so, they would indeed know nothing about al-Muqannaʿ, except insofar as the learned among them had read about him in other people's works, for the Balkhīs did not participate in his revolt. But it does not seem to be al-Balkhī who is speaking here. Both Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī and Ibn al-Nadīm quote him as calling sectarians of this type Muslimiyya; Ibn al-Nadīm has him add that some people call them Khurramdīniyya, but neither credits him with use of the term Mubayyiḍa. Further, Nashwān quotes him as saying, 'Here with us in Balkh

there is a group of them who permit unlawful things according to what has reached me about them',[32] while Ibn al-Nadīm has him say, 'It has reached me that here with us in Balkh there is a group of them in the village called Kharsād-wīljānī/Khurramābād.'[33] The information accords with our account, of course, but the wording is not suggestive of Abū Tammām, nor does al-Balkhī sound here like a man who had personally disputed with the people in question.

Most probably, it really is Abū Tammām who is speaking here. An Ismaili missionary, he will have toured the countryside disputing with the locals in an effort to win converts, shocked by, and seeking to rectify, their religious ignorance. We know the Ismailis were at work among the same type of Khurramī villagers at a later time in western Iran.[34] Abū Tammām came from Nīshāpūr (judging from his *nisba*) and was patronised partly by Muṭarrif b. Muḥammad, a vizier of Mardāwīj (d. 323/930) in western Iran, and partly by the Saffarid Abū Jaʿfar Ibn Bānū (d. 923/963) in Sīstān;[35] whether he was ever in Transoxiana we do not know. If it was in Rayy or Sīstān that he disputed with Khurramīs, it would once again be unsurprising that they knew nothing about al-Muqannaʿ, who had nothing to do with them. The one Ismaili missionary who certainly knew the area which had been involved in al-Muqannaʿ's revolt is al-Nasafī (d. 331/943 or later), a native of Nasaf who converted the Samanid Naṣr II and his court at Bukhārā to Ismailism.[36] He was learned about Iranian religion, too, and Abū Tammām could in principle have extracted Part II, including the first-person formulation, from a work of his. But there is nothing to show that he did,[37] so it is simpler to accept that Abū Tammām is giving us his own observations.

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32 Nashwān b. Saʿīd al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Ḥūr al-ʿīn*, ed. Kamāl Muṣṭafā (Baghdad and Cairo, 1948), p. 160.

33 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 408. Khurramābād is the reading of Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, p. 824, presumably of what I have rendered as Kharsād (all readings are conjectural). Tajaddud's edition suggests two names, though the text only speaks of one village.

34 Wilferd Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, NY, 1988), pp. 9 ff. (mid-sixth/twelfth century).

35 Al-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, vol. 2, p. 15; Joel Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam: Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and His Circle* (Leiden, 1986), pp. 17 f.

36 For al-Nasafī's death date, see Patricia Crone and Luke Treadwell, 'A New Text on Ismailism at the Samanid Court', in Chase F. Robinson, ed., *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards* (Leiden, 2003) [Ed.: included as article 10 in the present volume], p. 47.

37 Cf. Samuel M. Stern, 'Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī on Persian Religion', in his *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism* (Jerusalem, 1983), ch. 2. Neither al-Muqannaʿ nor the Mubayyiḍa are mentioned here.

The report on the dire religious state of the Mubayyiḍa also appears in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*. Here the Persian translator Qubāwī starts with a comment of his own: 'Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Naṣr [Qubāwī] says, "Those people
175 still remain in the districts of Kish and Nakhshab and | some of the villages of Bukhārā, such as the castle of 'Umar, the castle of Khākhushtuwan and the village of Zarmān".' This probably represents his own observation, since he lived in Bukhārā, gives us the names of villages in the Bukhārā region, and later reports his conversation with the elders of one such village. But he proceeds without any indication of change of source to the statement 'their religion is that they do not pray, fast or perform major ritual ablution. But they are trustworthy (*bih amānat bāshand*). All this they conceal from the Muslims, claiming to be Muslims.' One thinks that this is Qubāwī quoting his observations in the villages of Bukhārā, but in fact it is Qubāwī quoting Abū Tammām. The latter has, 'All there is to it [their religion] is neglect of prayer, fasting and washing for major ritual impurity. They practise dissimulation …', later adding, however, that they are trustworthy (*lahum ma'a hādhā kullih amāna*, see below, (c)).[38] Qubāwī could be suspected of deliberately trying to disguise the fact that he is using an Ismaili author. In any case, he is moving Abū Tammām's observations from Rayy, or wherever they were made, to the Bukhārā region, which had indeed been involved in al-Muqanna''s revolt, but which probably was not where Abū Tammām had been active.

Abū Tammām goes on to say that the Mubayyiḍa regard sharing women among themselves as lawful. He has made this point already in Part I, but here it seems to be based on first-hand information, for, he explains,

> They say that a woman is like a fragrant herb (*rayḥāna*) that is not diminished by the one who smells it. If one of their men desires to be alone with a woman belonging to another of them, he enters that man's house and puts a marker (*'alāma*) on the door, showing that he is inside. When her husband comes back and recognises the marker, he does not go in, but leaves until the other has satisfied his desire.

To this he adds a piece of information from 'Amr b. Muḥammad from a shaykh from Bukhārā: 'Every group of these Mubayyiḍa have a chief (*ra'īs*) who is

38 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, ed. Schefer, 73.13, ed. Raḍawī, 103.6. Frye translates 'Still, they remain in safety', understanding the statement in the light of the new context it has been moved to (*The History of Bukhara*, p. 75).

appointed to deflower their women on the night of the marriage procession. That I have not verified myself. Only God knows for sure.' The author's careful insistence that he has no first-hand knowledge of this reinforces the impression that the preceding information he had gathered for himself.

There is every reason to believe these observations: like other Khurramīs, the Mubayyiḍa did share women in some sense. But Abū Tammām's claim that a man visiting a woman would leave a mark by the door suggests that what he is talking about is the institution known to | anthropologists as polyandry, well 176
attested (*inter alia*) in its fraternal form in Tibet up to modern times: brothers would leave the family property undivided and share a wife, to whose sons the family property would pass undivided in its turn; if there were no sons, the property would pass to the eldest daughter, who could take as many husbands as she liked. In essence it was a system in which it did not matter who sired the future heirs as long as either their mother or their father was a transmitter of the family property. The men could have other wives on the side, but their children would not inherit, unless the men split up and divided the property, which was strongly resisted.[39] The system 'is really a sort of family communism in wives', as an Indian High Court judge noted in 1954 with reference to that current in his own district; 'it is a joint family both in property and in wives'.[40] Where this system (and/or its non-fraternal counterpart) has been practised, there tend to be stories of hats, spears, shields or other markers being left by the door, though it is not clear what basis this has in reality.[41] The existence of such family communism in Iran is attested in Chinese reports, in recently published Bactrian documents,[42] and in al-Bīrūnī on the region from northern

39 For a minutely detailed account of all known cases with special reference to field work conducted in Tibet in 1938–1939, 1949 and intermittently between 1950 and 1957, see Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, *A Study of Polyandry* (The Hague, 1968).

40 Quoted in Peter, *Polyandry*, p. 83.

41 See Peter, *Polyandry*, p. 60 (Strabo's Yemen), p. 94 (Nayars), p. 99 (Ceylon), p. 314 (Tibetans who thought that such markers had been used in the past), pp. 314, 375, 451 (Tibetans who found the idea hilarious).

42 Kazuo Enoki, 'On the Nationality of the Hephtalites', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 18 (1959), pp. 51ff.; Nicholas Sims-Williams, ed., *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan: I, Legal and Economic Documents* (Oxford, 2000), documents A, X, Y, which were drawn up in 343, 760 and 782 AD or ten years earlier, according to François de Blois, 'Du nouveau sur la chronologie bactrienne post-hellénistique: l'ère de 223–224 ap. J.-C.', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (April–June, 2006), pp. 991–997. My thanks to Kevin van Bladel for putting me on to this material.

Afghanistan to Kashmir.[43] It is attested well before Mazdak,[44] to whose ideas it is undoubtedly relevant. Whether it can account for all the reports of Khurramī views on women is another question which I shall once more have to defer to another publication.

The passage on the peculiar marital system of the Mubayyiḍa also appears in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, complete with the sweet-smelling flower and the marker by the door, but Qubāwī adds an interesting observation of his own, not about the wife-sharing, but rather about the custom of having a chief deflower the bride on the night before the wedding, which Abū Tammām had quoted on the authority of a Bukhāran. 'Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Naṣr (Qubāwī) says: "I asked the elders of the village what was the sense of allowing such great pleasure to this one man, while the rest were deprived of it."' The answer he received was not that a chief claimed *droit de seigneur*, as one might have expected, but rather that he was collecting payment for services he had rendered to the grooms: 'Their rule was that every youth who reached maturity should satisfy his need with this person until he should marry a woman. His repayment for that was that the wife should stay with him for the first night.' Qubāwī adds that when the man became old, another would be appointed in his place and that the local name for such a person was *tkāna* (or *thkhāna*). Incongruously, he retains Abū Tammām's cautionary remark: 'I do not know whether this is
177 true', only to repeat, 'I heard this story from the | elders of the village, and from the inhabitants who live in these villages.'[45]

What is interesting about this, apart from Qubāwī's desire to get to the bottom of things, is that the Bukhāran *shaykh* quoted by Abū Tammām had heard of this institution at least a century and possibly two before Qubāwī went out to ask about it: the village elders nonetheless recognised it and provided a name and a rationale for it. So the institution was both real and long-lived, odd though it sounds. It is a pity that it was only the sensationalist aspects of rural life that could induce the townsmen to do field work of this kind.

(b) *Later Confusion*

Abū Tammām continues by noting that despite their lack of legal observance, the Mubayyiḍa are trustworthy (*lahum maʿa hādhā amāna*): they do not cheat or steal or harm people in any way. As we have seen, the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* reduces this to the statement that they are trustworthy (*bih amānat bāshand*)

43 Al-Bīrūnī, *Taḥqīq mā lil-Hind*, ed. Eduard Sachau (London, 1887), p. 52; tr. Eduard Sachau as *al-Beruni's India* (2nd ed., London, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 108 f.

44 See the document drawn up in 343, above, note 42.

45 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, ed. Schefer, pp. 73 f.; ed. Raḍawī, pp. 103 f.; tr. Frye, pp. 75 f.

and inserts it in the account of their antinomianism. Shahrastānī must have read this, for after telling us (on the basis of al-Baghdādī) that al-Muqannaʿ began as an adherent of the Rizāmiyya and that his followers are the Mubayyiḍa of Transoxiana, he adds that they 'believe in omitting the legal precepts, saying that religion consists in knowledge of the imam alone; some of them say that religion consists of (just) two things: knowledge of the imam and faithfully discharging trusts (*adāʾ al-amāna*)'.[46] The imams have presumably been imported from the Muslimiyya, of whom the Rizāmiyya were supposed to be a subdivision: it was the Muslimiyya who allegedly held knowledge of the imam to be the only obligation, since it would cause all the religious precepts to fall away.[47] The rest is a confused version of Qubāwī translated back into Arabic. In the *Tabṣirat al-ʿawāmm*, compiled by an unknown author of the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century and attributed to Ḥasanī Rāzī, Shahrastānī's account has turned into a claim that, for al-Muqannaʿ's followers, 'religion consists of two things, first knowledge of the imams and secondly, regard for the imamate (*imāmat nigahdāshtan*)'.[48]

Part III

(a) *Mahdism and Other Beliefs* (*Madelung and Walker, 78f. = 77*)

Abū Tammām now returns to a written source, which cannot be identical with that in Part I, partly because the information does not accord with it and partly because the author reflected in Part III had a predilection for | rhetorical 178
repetition which is not found in the first two parts.[49]

46 Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal waʾl-niḥal*, ed. William Cureton (London, 1842–1846), p. 115; French tr. Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot as *Livre des religions et des sectes* (Louvain and Paris, 1986), vol. 1, pp. 454 f., with well-justified expression of puzzlement in note 121.

47 Cf. al-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar (attrib.), 'Masāʾil al-imāma', par. 48, in Josef van Ess, ed., *Frühe muʿtazilitische Häresiographie: zwei Werke des Nāšiʾ al-Akbar* (*gest. 293H*) (Beirut, 1971), p. 32; al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa*, p. 42.

48 Murtaḍā b. al-Dāʿī Ḥasanī Rāzī (attrib.), *Tabṣirat al-ʿawāmm fī maʿrifat maqālāt al-ānām*, ed. ʿAbbās Iqbāl (Tehran, 1313 Sh./1934), p. 179.

49 Madelung and Walker, *An Ismaili Heresiography*, p. 78 = 77: they permit bloodshed 'only when they tie themselves to the banner of rebellion (*rāyat al-khilāf*) and when they agree on going to war to seek revenge (*ṭalab al-thaʾr*)' (III (a)); they have a chief 'with whom they meet clandestinely (*khafiyyan*) and with whom they confer in secret (*sirran*)'; and 'They do not rise in the morning except upon a promise of moving on this day (*tawaʿud biʾl-ḥaraka min yawmihim*) [and they do not enter the evening] except in anticipation of going out in the morrow (*taraqqub lil-khurūj fī ghaddihim*)' (III (b)).

After telling us about the trustworthiness of the Mubayyiḍa, Abū Tammām continues that they will avoid bloodshed when they are at peace, but allow it when they raise the banner of revolt. In every locality (*balad*) they have a chief whom they call *farmānsālār* and with whom they meet in secret. They maintain that the Mahdī who will arise at the end of times is al-Mahdī b. Fīrūz b. ʿImrān and that he is a descendant of Fāṭima, the daughter of Abū Muslim. They also have messengers (*rusul*) and ambassadors (*sufarāʾ*) who move about among them and whom they call *firīshtagān*, that is to say *malāʾika*, angels. 'They do not rise in the morning except upon the promise of moving this day', presumably meaning that they expect the appearance of the Mahdī any moment. They also believe in the *rajʿa*, but we are not told exactly what they mean by it.

There is no trace of this section in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, but in al-Maqdisī we also read that the Khurramīs will avoid bloodshed except when they tie the banner of revolt, and that they have messengers (*rusul*) whom they call *firīshtagān*. Al-Maqdisī does not mention their *farmānsālār*, merely that they have imams to whom they refer in matters of *aḥkām*. But he too says that they make much of Abū Muslim and curse al-Manṣūr for having killed him, and he too identifies the Mahdī who will rise at the end of times as al-Mahdī b. Fīrūz, a descendant of Fāṭima, daughter of Abū Muslim. Their belief in the *rajʿa* is also mentioned, again without specification of what they meant by it. Since Abū Tammām is describing the Mubayyiḍa of Transoxiana, whereas al-Maqdisī knew the Khurramīs from visits to the Jibāl, one initially thinks al-Maqdisī is shifting information from an eastern to a western locale. But as will be seen (below, (b)), it is more likely to be Abū Tammām who was doing so.

Al-Maqdisī adds some observations on their attitude to wine and their religion as rooted in light-darkness dualism, whereupon he continues:

> Those whom we have seen in their homes in Māsabadhān and Mihrijān-qadhaq we found to be exceedingly attentive to cleanliness (*niẓāfa*) and purity (*ṭahāra*), and very friendly and helpful to people. We found some who believed in holding women in common, with the women's consent, and in deeming lawful everything which the self delights in and desires by nature, as long as nobody is harmed by it.[50]

Once again, we find that a scholar has tried to get to the bottom of things by going to hear for himself, in his case in Khurramī villages in the Jibāl. That the

50 Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. 4, p. 31.

Khurramīs do not observe the ritual precepts of Islam seems to be taken for granted: what al-Maqdisī stresses is that they were | an extremely clean people, 179
perhaps in tacit polemic against a supposition that they must be filthy; and his insistence that they were exceedingly kind people could perhaps be seen as directed against Abū Tammām's description of them as secretive and inward-turned. He confirms that some of them believed in sharing women, with the women's consent (which is not suggestive of fraternal polyandry), but here too the nuanced tone in which he reports suggests a desire to correct stereotypes.

(b) ***Imams* (*Madelung and Walker, 78f.* = *77*)**

Abū Tammām continues:

> These people claim that when God returned to His throne after His departure from the body (*qālab*) of Muḥammad, He sent His spirit to ʿAlī, on whom be peace, and after him to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, and then after him to his son Abū Hāshim, and so on (*wāḥidan baʿda wāḥid*) until God incarnated Himself in the shape of Abū Muslim. But then He returned to His throne after leaving the shape of Abū Muslim. Next He sent His spirit to Abū ʾl-Muḍar (*sic*), who went to Byzantium. Al-Mahdī b. Fīrūz will come forth from Byzantium at the end of time according to their claims.

This is strikingly different from the doctrinal summary given in Part I. Most obviously, the divine incarnations are no longer messengers who appear at long intervals from Adam onwards, bringing new revelations, but rather imams who take over from Muḥammad and follow one another in an uninterrupted sequence down to the Mahdī at the end of times. In line with this, the focus is now on the Prophet's family, which does not figure in Part I at all: the divine spirit here passes from Muḥammad to ʿAlī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, Abū Hāshim, and so on down to Abū Muslim, and from there to a certain Abū ʾl-Muḍar (a mistake for Abū Muḍar or a corruption?). Further, the orientation is western: we move from Abū Muslim to Abū ʾl-Muḍar, of whom we are told that he went to Byzantium; and it is from Byzantium that the descendant of Abū Muslim will come forth as the Mahdī at the end of times. Finally, al-Muqannaʿ himself has disappeared from the list.

The imamic sequence from ʿAlī via Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya to Abū Hāshim is famous due to the claim that Abū Hāshim bequeathed the imamate to the ʿAbbasids. In the sequence described by Abū Tammām, it is not to the ʿAbbasids that the imamate is transferred, but rather to Abū Muslim via an undisclosed sequence of imams in between—*wāḥidan baʿda wāḥid*, as | we are told, despite 180

the brief period involved—and from Abū Muslim it continues in the descendants of the latter's daughter Fāṭima, as a non-Arab counterpart to the imamate in the descendants of Fāṭima, the daughter of Muḥammad. The message is that Abū Muslim is the true heir of the Prophet, not the ʿAbbasids, who had simply usurped a bequest made to Abū Muslim, and not the ʿAlids either, since their rights had passed from Abū Hāshim to Abū Muslim. This elevation of Abū Muslim to the position of true, and indeed divine, imam over and above the entire Hāshimī family undoubtedly represents a response to Abū Muslim's murder, quite possibly in Khurāsān, among Iranians who would later be known under labels such as Muslimiyya, Khurramiyya and Mubayyiḍa. The question is what, if anything, it has to do with al-Muqannaʿ.

In principle, widely spaced bringers of revelation are perfectly compatible with continuous sequences of imams: the two conceptions were brilliantly combined in Ismailism (with both the bringers of revelation and the imams shorn of their divinity). But if Abū Muslim received the imamate from the ʿAlids to start a line of divine Iranian imams, what was al-Muqannaʿ doing as a messenger bringing a new revelation immediately thereafter? Differently put, the idea of Abū Muslim as imam rested on acceptance of the continuing validity of Muḥammad's revelation: the claim was only that Iranian leaders of a divine nature knew better than anyone else what its real meaning was. By contrast, al-Muqannaʿ was a messenger who abrogated Muḥammad's revelation, or conceivably he cast Abū Muslim in that role (as discussed above, Part I (a)): either way, the imamic claims transmitted from Muḥammad's family were irrelevant. There are no imams in eastern sources such as Narshakhī, Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, Gardīzī, al-Bīrūnī, or Abū Tammām's Part I because there is no room for them; and when sources displaying familiarity with Abū Tammām's Part III try to combine the two conceptions, the result is always apparently confusing.

There is an example of this in al-Maqdisī, who tells us in his account of al-Muqannaʿ's revolt that al-Muqannaʿ held the divine spirit to have manifested itself in Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya and al-Muqannaʿ himself.[51] Here, Seth seems to have been added to make Muḥammad the seventh lawgiver, for what follows is an imamic sequence: the imams are ʿAlī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya and al-Muqannaʿ, who thus takes the place of Abū Hāshim.[52] No doubt this is why the

51 Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. 6, p. 97. Note that at 98.1 he uses the word *qālab*, also used by Abū Tammām in III (b), for the shape in which al-Muqannaʿ will reappear.

52 In his account of the Khurramīs, al-Maqdisī merely says in more abstract terms that the

list of divine incarnations in Abū ʾl-Maʿālī culminates in al-Muqannaʿ under the name of *Abū* Hāshim.[53] But if al-Muqannaʿ saw himself as an imam, he must have seen himself as taking over from | Abū Muslim, and here Abū Mus- 181
lim has disappeared, both as a messenger *and* as a recipient of the imamate from Abū Hāshim. In Abū Tammām, Part III, where Abū Muslim takes over the imamate from Abū Hāshim, it is al-Muqannaʿ who has disappeared. The most obvious explanation is that the imamic sequence did not originally have anything to do with al-Muqannaʿ at all, and that al-Maqdisī's attempt to combine them reflects the problem posed by Abū Tammām's strangely contradictory material: he reported both, without any attempt to show how they went together.

Al-Baghdādī, who reveals his dependence on Abū Tammām's Part I by giving al-Muqannaʿ's name as Hishām b. Ḥakīm, also does his best to reconcile the information: he gives us the standard sequence of messengers from Adam to al-Muqannaʿ, but inserts ʿAlī into it, undoubtedly because he also knew Part III.[54] Similarly, al-Isfarāʾinī, whose account shares the name Hishām and other information with Abū Tammām's, inserts ʿAlī and his descendants into the sequence of divine messengers, yet continues it with Abū Muslim and al-Muqannaʿ.[55]

We do not know how al-Muqannaʿ envisaged the transmission of religious guidance in between the periodic incarnations of God's spirit in the lawgiving messengers, and since the only period for which the question was relevant was that of Islam, he may not even have thought of it, for he was the last divine incarnation, the Mahdī. What Abū Tammām's material does allow us to see is that the inclusion of Abū Muslim in the standard list of messengers is most likely to represent an addition caused by the confusion of al-Muqannaʿ with other Khurāsānīs, who saw him as the heir to Abū Hāshim. To outsiders, all those who talked about both Abū Muslim and manifestations of the divine spirit on earth had to be the same.

Khurramīs hold all the messengers to come from the same spirit despite the different nature of their laws, clearly with reference to their sequence of widely spaced bringers of revelation, and that in their view revelation (*al-waḥy*) will never be cut off, perhaps meaning that it continues in their imams (Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. 4, p. 30).

53 Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, *Bayān*, p. 58. It looked much more meaningful before the discovery of Abū Tammām, cf. ʿAbbās Zaryāb Khūʾī, 'Nukātī dar bāra-yi Muqannaʿ', in *Haftād maqāla: armaghān-i farhangī bih duktur Ghulām-Ḥusayn Ṣadīqī*, ed. Yaḥyā Mahdawī and Īraj Afshār (Tehran, 1369–1371 Sh./1990–1992), pp. 85f. (my thanks to Masoud Jafari Jazi for drawing this article to my attention).

54 Baghdādī, *Farq*, p. 243.

55 Isfarāʾinī, *Tabṣīr*, p. 131. For the other shared information, see above, note 20.

Where, then, did Abū Tammām find his imamic sequence in Part III? Though it may have originated in Khurāsān, it is in western Iran that we encounter it: by the later third/ninth century, Abū Muslim had come to be identified as the progenitor of Bābak via his daughter Fāṭima and her real or alleged son, Muṭahhar.[56] The Khurramīs of the Jibāl were Muslimiyya, Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb tells us,[57] and Bābak's people were Fāṭimiyya Khurramīs, al-Masʿūdī says.[58] It is in connection with the Khurramīs of the Jibāl that al-Maqdisī reports the expectation of Mahdī b. Fīrūz, a descendant of Fāṭima, daughter of Abū Muslim.[59] It is in connection with the Khurramī revolts in the Jibāl that Niẓām al-Mulk reports the same (though given his view that Khurramīs and all other sects remotely like them were essentially the same, this may be more by accident than design).[60] The Ismaili chronicler Dihkhudā reports that the 'Mazdakīs'
182 of | Azarbayjan who accepted Ismailism in the time of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, only to repudiate it in 536/1141, believed the imamate to have passed from ʿAlī via Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, Abū Hāshim and the ʿAbbasid Ibrāhīm al-Imām to Abū Muslim and his daughter, after which the imam went to Byzantium, from whence he would return.[61] Of the Qarāmiṭa, too, we are told that they believed their Mahdī, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, to have gone to Rūm.[62] In 218/833, when a major Khurramī revolt in the Jibāl was bloodily suppressed, one of the rebel leaders had escaped to Byzantium with a large number of followers:[63]

56 Al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. Vladimir F. Guirgass (Leiden, 1888), p. 397; for this daughter of Abū Muslim's, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* (Cairo, 1931), vol. 10, p. 207 (where she is said to have died without descendants).

57 Nāshīʾ, 'Masāʾil al-imāma', par. 52, in Van Ess, *Frühe muʿtazilitische Häresiographie*, p. 35; cf. W. Madelung, 'Frühe muʾtazilitische Häresiographie: das *Kitāb al-Uṣūl* des Ǧaʿfar b. Ḥarb?', *Der Islam*, 57 (1980), pp. 220–236; repr. in his *Religious Schools and Sects*, article VI.

58 Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, ed. Pellat, vol. 4, § 2398; Paris ed., vol. 6, p. 187.

59 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, vol. 4, p. 31; cf. also vol. 6, p. 95.

60 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk* (*Siyāsatnāma*), ed. Hubert Darke (Tehran, 1364 Sh./1985), p. 320; tr. Hubert Darke (on the basis of his earlier edition), (London, 1960), p. 244 (ch. 47, § 14).

61 Dihkhudā in Kāshānī, *Zubdat al-tawārīkh, bakhsh-i Fāṭimīyān wa Nizārīyān*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh (2nd ed., Tehran, 1366 Sh./1987), pp. 187, 189; in Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh: qismat-i Ismāʿīlīyān wa Fāṭimīyān wa Nizārīyān wa dāʿīyān wa rafīqān*, ed. Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh and Mudarrisī Zanjānī (Tehran, 1338 Sh./1959), pp. 150, 153 (cf. 151, where the Khurramīs are explicitly placed in Azarbayjan); cf. Madelung, *Religious Trends*, pp. 9 f.

62 Al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shīʿa*, p. 62 (drawn to my attention by Michael Cook).

63 See Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780–842* (Stanford, CA, 1988), pp. 282 f.; Mohamed Rekaya, 'Mise au point sur Théophobe et l'alliance de Bâbek avec Théophile',

it could be the memory of this man which lies behind the story of the Mahdī who would come from Byzantium.

In short, Abū Tammām seems to have incorporated an account of Khurramīs based on information relating to the Jibāl and Azarbayjan (and perhaps Rayy as well) into an account of Transoxianan sectarians of the same type on the common assumption that their beliefs will have been the same. One did not have to share Niẓām al-Mulk's outlook to think that this was a legitimate procedure. Where Abū Tammām may have found it I do not know. He did make a slight attempt to harmonise it with the information in Part I by using the distinctive phrase 'when God returned to His throne' in Part III as well. But he left the word for 'form' as *qālab* instead of changing it to *ṣūra*, the word consistently used in Part I, and above all he left the two sequences as they were, in all their blatant incompatibility. One is grateful for that. Had he tried to harmonise them, it would probably have been impossible to unravel them.

In conclusion, the main findings may be summarised as follows: Abū Tammām's three parts appear to be based on a book by a certain Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad (wr. before the mid-fourth/tenth century), his own observations, and an unknown account relating to Khurramīs in western Iran, respectively. The Muqannaʿiyya (reflected in Part I) and the Muslimiyya (reflected in Part III) adhered to different doctrines, however closely connected these groups may have been on the ground. The inclusion of Abū Muslim in al-Muqannaʿ's list of divine incarnations is probably a mistake. And heresiographical accounts of al-Muqannaʿ written after Abū Tammām, notably al-Baghdādī and Shahrastānī, can be regarded as irrelevant to this enquiry.

Byzantion, 44 (1974), pp. 41–67; John Rosser, 'Theophilus' Khurramite Policy and its Finale', *Byzantina*, 6 (1974), pp. 263–271; Salvatore Cosentino, 'Iranian Contingents in Byzantine Army', in *La Persia e Bisanzio: convegno internationale* (*Roma, 14–18 ottobre 2002*) (Rome, 2004), pp. 245–261.

CHAPTER 6

The Muqannaʿ Narrative in the *Tārīkhnāma*: Part I, Introduction, Edition and Translation*

With Masoud Jafari Jazi

Introduction

The *Tārīkhnāma* is the work known to most Islamicists as Balʿamī's translation of al-Ṭabarī's *Taʾrīkh*. Commissioned by the Sāmānid ruler Manṣūr b. Nūḥ in 352/963,[1] Balʿamī's work was not actually a translation, but rather a free adaptation of al-Ṭabarī's chronicle; and the *Tārīkhnāma* is not really Balʿamī's adaptation, but rather the versions in which it survives. It is extant in at least 160 manuscripts, and some of them contain so much material by later hands that they must be considered historical sources in their own right rather than versions of Balʿamī's work (let alone of al-Ṭabarī's). One group of manuscripts, for example, continue the history all the way down to the time of the caliph al-Mustarshid (d. 529/1135).[2] Balʿamī does not seem to have dealt in great detail
158 with the ʿAbbāsid period, or even to have covered it at all,[3] and he certainly did | not deal with the revolt of al-Muqannaʿ. It is absent from what are considered the best manuscripts for the reconstitution of his work and does not figure in either Zotenberg's French translation[4] or Rawshan's edition of the part dealing with the Islamic period.[5]

* We should like to thank Kirstie Venanzi of the library of the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, for her invaluable help in procuring CDs of the manuscripts from Istanbul and Gotha, Sandy Morton and Kathy Lazenbatt for help at the Royal Asiatic Society, Dagmar Riedel for checking the Vienna manuscript for us, Peter Golden for speedy and extremely helpful answers to questions concerning Turks, and Michael Cook for reading and commenting on the article.

1 See E.L. Daniel, "Manuscripts and editions of Balʿamī's *Tarjamah-i Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1990, 282, a fundamental work to which we are much indebted.

2 Daniel, "Manuscripts", 290.

3 A.C.S. Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography and Political Legitimacy: Balʿamī's Tārīkhnāma*, London and New York, 2007, 104.

4 Balʿamī, *Chronique*, tr. H. Zotenberg, 4 vols., Paris, 1867–1874.

5 *Tārīkhnāma-yi Ṭabarī gardānida-yi mansūb bih Balʿamī*, ed. M. Rawshan, 5 vols., Tehran, 1366.

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One group of manuscripts, however, does contain an account of al-Muqannaʿ's revolt, usually inserted in the section on al-Manṣūr's caliphate after Abū Muslim's death. This account is extant in at least thirty-two manuscripts,[6] and two are available in print. Sadighi, the first to use it, found it in a Vienna manuscript,[7] and this version is reproduced in the annotations to Rawshan's edition of the *Tārīkhnāma*, presumably on the basis of Sadighi's copy. It gives the narrative in a short and late form which often fails to make sense (see below, under RS). A different version of the narrative is available in an Indian lithograph based on an unknown manuscript, which gives a text in an even worse state of disorder.[8] Here we offer a new edition of the text based on better manuscripts, along with an English translation, commentary, and an overall discussion of the light it throws on al-Muqannaʿ's revolt.

The Manuscripts

The manuscripts we have consulted are here listed in alphabetical order of the English sigla used in the translation, text and commentary, followed by the Persian sigla used in the edition. For further details about the manuscripts, the reader is referred to Daniel's inventory and the catalogues listed there. The two groups to which we have assigned them are explained after the list.

AS (اس) Aya Sofya 3049 (Tauer 7). Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, unfoliated (the Muqannaʿ narrative is placed in the caliphate of al-Manṣūr). Date: 846/1442. Group 1. Gives an abbreviated and often corrupt version of little use.

B (ب) British Library, London, Or. 5343, fols. 392[a]–394[a]. Date: eighth/fourteenth century? Group 1. This narrative, which is often close to FT, and occasionally to FR, preserves important information lost or garbled in all the other manuscripts that we have seen; but the beginning is missing.

E (إ) Elliott 377. Bodleian Library, Oxford, fols. 307[a]–308[b]. Date: 944/1538. Group 2, almost identical with M.

6 See the inventory in Daniel, "Manuscripts", 309 ff.

7 Cf. G.-Ḥ. Ṣadīqī, "Baʿḍī az kuhantarīn āthār-i nathr-i fārsī", *Dānishkada-yi adabiyāt* 13, no. 4, 1345, 63; G.-H. Sadighi, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au IIe et au IIIe siècle de l'hégire*, Paris, 1938, 164n = *Junbishhā-yi dīnī-yi īrānī dar qarnhā-yi duwwum wa siwwum-i hijrī*, Tehran, 1375, 221, with much reference to it thereafter.

8 *Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*, Kānpūr, 1916, 641–644.

F (ف) Fatih 4282 (Tauer 8). Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, fols. 383b–385b. Date: 850/1446. Group 1. Very close to S; our principal manuscript.

FT (فت) Fatih 4284 (Tauer 5). Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, fols. 381a–b. Date: 817/1414. Group 1. Close to F and S, but closer to B.

FTH (فتح) Fatih 4281 (Tauer 4). Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, fols. 244a–245b. Date: 725/1325. Group 1. Our earliest dated manuscript, often | close to F and FT and occasionally to B, this manuscript proved a disappointment; unlike B, it preserves very little information missing in the other versions.

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FR (فر) Frazer 131. Bodleian Library, Oxford, fols. 531a–533b. Date: not given. Group 2, often close to G, but occasionally agrees with B, a manuscript of group 1.

G (گ) Gotha, Landesbibliothek 24–25, vol. ii, fols. 231a–233a. Date: uncertain. Group 2, and close to FR and L1. The first volume of this manuscript has a colophon giving the copyist's name and dating it to Muḥarram 713/1313. It is an important early copy. The second volume was copied by two different scribes, however. It starts in a *nastaʿlīq* which runs for a few pages and then switches to another hand for the rest; it has no colophon and, as Daniel notes ("Manuscripts", 310), the very fact that it has the Muqannaʿ narrative suggests that it was copied, at least in part, from an unrelated volume. Its Muqannaʿ narrative is poor. The narrative is abbreviated, there are numerous careless omissions and spelling mistakes, and it adds very little to the other manuscripts.

M (م) Morley 11 (RAS 24). Royal Asiatic Society, London, unfoliated (the Muqannaʿ narrative is placed in the caliphate of al-Manṣūr). Date: 988/1580. Group 1, and almost identical with E.

RS (رص) Rawshan's printing, in the notes to his *Tārīkhnāma* (iii, pp. 1594–1598), of the manuscript in which Sadighi discovered the Muqannaʿ narrative, Nationalbibliothek, MS pers., Cod. mixt. 374, fols. 281b–283a.[9] Date: fol. 8r contains the signature of the Ottoman sultan Aḥmad III (1115–1143/1703–30). Group 1.

S (س) Ouseley 299, Bodleian Library, Oxford, pp. 1443–1451. Date: 1051/1641. Group 1, and very close to F. Judging from the handwriting, it was copied in Transoxania.[10]

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9 It is no. 829 in G.F. Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, Vienna, 1865–1867, ii, 64 f., and Daniel, "Manuscripts", 321, which caused us many headaches until Dagmar Riedel explained to us that Flügel renumbered manuscripts already catalogued without this affecting their shelf mark; he gives the shelf mark at the end of each entry.

10 Our thanks to Iraj Afshar, who identified the handwriting as a Transoxanian *nastaʿlīq*.

In addition, we checked our edition against the following manuscripts:

L1 (1ل) School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 47978. Date: possibly eighth/fourteenth century, but there is little in the contents to suggest great age. Group 2.

L2 (2ل) British Library, London, Add. 16814, fols. 352ᵃ–353ᵇ. Date: tenth/sixteenth century? Group 2.

L3 (3ل) British Library, London, Add. 26174, fols. 294ᵃ–296ᵃ. Date: Jumada II, 906/1500. Group 2.

L4 (4ل) India Office (now the British Library), London, I.O. Islamic 2669 (Ethé 2), fols. 330ᵇ–332ᵃ. Date: "very old", but unfortunately the hand on which this estimate is based comes to an abrupt end at fol. 314ᵇ. | The rest, 160
including the Muqannaʿ narrative, is written in a more recent-looking *nastaʿlīq*, and there is nothing in the contents to suggest high age. Group 1.

L5 (5ل) India Office, British Library, I.O. Islamic 738 (Ethé 3), unfoliated (the Muqannaʿ narrative is placed in the caliphate of al-Manṣūr). Date: 1010/1601 f.? Group 1.

L6 (6ل) India Office, British Library, I.O. Islamic 125 (Ethé 4), fols. 475ᵃ–478ᵃ. Date: 1025/1616. Group 1.

L7 (7ل) India Office, British Library, I.O. Islamic 318 (Ethé 5), unfoliated (the Muqannaʿ narrative follows the accession of al-Manṣūr). Date: 1089/1678? Group 1.

L8 (8ل) India Office, British Library, I.O. Islamic 3310 (Ethé 7), fols. 647ᵇ–650ᵃ. Date: before 1035/1625. Group 1.

L9 (9ل) India Office, British Library, I.O. Islamic 1938 (Ethé 9), fols. 637ᵇ–676ᵇ. Group 2.

L10 (10ل) India Office, British Library, I.O. Islamic 747 (Ethé 10), fols. 440ᵃ–441ᵇ. Date: 1013/1604 f. This is the only manuscript we have seen which places the narrative in the caliphate of al-Mahdī (though it still starts *pas Bū Jaʿfar mardi rā bi-Khurāsān firistād*). Group 1.

L11 (11ل) Royal Asiatic Society 23 (Morley 10), fols. 220ᵇ–222ᵇ. Date: "of considerable antiquity". Close to G. Group 2.

The lithograph (group 2) was too corrupt to be of any use.

The manuscripts vary quite considerably among themselves in both major and minor ways, but they fall into two broad groups. The first is represented by AS, B, F, FT, FTH, S, RS, L4, L5, L6, L7, L8 and L10, the second by E, FR, G, M, L1, L2, L3, L9, L11 and the lithograph. The narrative in group 1 is fuller than in group 2, even when the later manuscripts shorten or truncate it. Group 2 lacks sections

2, 6, and 19, as well as 23:2. Sections 4 and 7 are often omitted in group 2 as well, and when it does have section 7, it has it in a quite different version. It also has different versions of other episodes,[11] and the two groups are sometimes set apart by distinct wording too.[12] But both groups have material not found in the other, and one sometimes needs both to reconstitute the narrative. If L1, L11, and the second volume of G are as ancient as they are estimated to be, the groups had separated before the time from which our earliest manuscripts survive.

Neither group, however, preserves enough for a full reconstitution of the narrative, let alone of something that could pass for the original text: the beginning of the story is lost in both versions, and several crucial passages relating to the loss and reconquest of Samarqand are so defectively preserved in all the manuscripts that one can only guess at the events behind them.
161 In addition, there are | countless differences of wording and word order, and even sentence order, both between the two groups and within them, and all manuscripts have passages in which hopeless confusion reigns.

Editorial Principles

Our editorial principles are based on the fact that the original text cannot be reconstituted: what we have are many different refractions of a narrative which seems to be irretrievably lost. It is clearly in group 1 that the best refractions are preserved, and our edition is based on F, which is both an early manuscript and one which has a reasonably full version. The much later, but very similar, S has been used in a closely supporting role. All differences between these two manuscripts are given in the notes, except for trivial variations such as *pas chūn* in the one as against *chūn* in the other, the use of the accusative *rā* or the indefinite *ī* in the one and not in the other, or minor variations in word order. With these exceptions, F and S are identical where no differences are indicated. Since our interest lies in the events covered in the narrative rather

11 Notably of the ruse used by Khārija against Muslim b. ʿUqba (cf. below, 5:5). In addition, Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī is governor of Ahwāz in all manuscripts of group 1 except B (which has Herāt, of which Ahwāz is clearly a corruption); by contrast, he is governor of Kirmān in all manuscripts of group 2.

12 In the story of Saʿīd's sheep, group 1 has Saʿīd say *agar Rabīʿa wa Muḍar*, whereas group 2 omits the *agar* (13:1). In group 1 Jibraʾīl puts his dead brother in a tomb (*ba-gūr kard*); in almost all manuscripts of group 2 he buries him (*dafn kard*) (9:14).

than the history of textual transmission, we have inserted material from the other manuscripts when they preserve narrative which must have been in the original text (if not necessarily in precisely that wording), since the versions without it make little or no sense. Most of the insertions come from B and FT, two early manuscripts of which the former in particular preserves valuable material lost elsewhere; but a few insertions come from elsewhere, occasionally even from group 2. All insertions are identified in the notes, and when they are more than one word long, they are signalled in the text by * at the beginning and ** at the end. Non-trivial variants in AS, B, FH, and FT and the manuscripts of group 2 are also indicated in the notes, and some of these notes have been translated or paraphrased in the English translation as well to enable readers without Persian to follow the discussion. But we have made no attempt to indicate all the countless ways in which these manuscripts differ from F and S, or among themselves, and group 2 is normally represented by E, G, M and FR alone. Variations from the manuscripts marked L followed by a number, when indicated at all, are normally from L1 and L11, in view of their possibly high age. But generally speaking, the L group is only included when it has variants of interest not found in any of the other manuscripts (which is rarely the case), or when it is important to see what all the manuscripts say. When material from manuscripts other than F or S is reproduced in the notes, the wording is that found in the manuscript listed first. They do not always use the same wording, but attempts to indicate the differences would have made the critical apparatus enormous and even more confusing than it is already without any useful purpose being served thereby.

We have deferred to the current practice of replacing old orthographic conventions with modern ones even where this affects the *rasm*, as in the writing of *bih* as a separate word, or the use of *alif* + *yā'* as the indefinite marker after *hā-yi ghayr malfūẓ* instead of *hamza* (sometimes used in the manuscripts, though mostly they use nothing at all). The practice seems questionable in that it involves the insertion of whole letters, as opposed to mere diacritical marks, in the text and obscures the lines along which words were corrupted, and in the notes we have left the *rasm* as we found it. But we have freely inserted the stroke distinguishing *gāf* from *kāf*, dots distinguishing *ʿayn* from | *ghayn*, *khā'* or *jīm* 162
from *ḥā'*, the *madd*, and so on (which are sometimes found in the manuscripts too, but often not). Some manuscripts quite consistently write the dot over *dāl*s following a vowel, but we have not reproduced it. All paragraph divisions and punctuation are our own, but the heading is in the manuscript.

Orthography apart, our editing is conservative. Even passages which are obviously wrong have been left as they are when the original wording cannot be reconstituted, though it may be easy to guess what was originally meant.

For example, we have refrained from emending the text when it identifies al-Muqannaʿ and the Khāqān (para. 2 and 3), though it is both wrong and confusing, because one can only guess at how the text came to be corrupted. Emending it would have amounted to contributing to the process by which the narrative was transformed. In situations such as this, where all the manuscripts are corrupt, we have decided rather to show all the different versions in the notes, to allow the reader to make up his or her own mind as to what the original statement may have been. We engage in our own guesswork in the separate commentary, to which the reader is referred for discussion of textual and historical matters alike. In view of the degree to which the text has been corrupted in the course of recopying and retelling, we also thought it best to make the translation as literal as we could without rendering it positively painful.

Symbols, Abbreviations and Main Short Forms

Apart from the manuscript sigla, special signs in the notes to the edition are limited to the plus sign (+) for "adds" and the minus sign (written ÷ to forestall confusion with the hyphen) for "does not have".

Most short forms are found within reasonable proximity of the first reference, where full bibliographical details are given, but the following are used too often, or at intervals too wide, to be easily retrievable:

Abū ʾl-Maʿālī	Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, *Bayān al-adyān*, ed. H. Raḍī, Tehran, 1342.
EI²	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, Leiden, 1960–2004.
Gardīzī	Gardīzī, *Tārīkh*, ed. ʿA.-H. Ḥabībī, Tehran, 1363.
Ḥamza	Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *Taʾrīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ waʾl-anbiyāʾ*, ed. I.M.E. Gottwaldt, Leipzig, 1844–1848; ed. Beirut, 1961. References are given in that order, in the form 221/163.
IA	Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ʾl-Taʾrīkh*, ed. C. Tornberg, Dār Ṣādir reprint, Beirut, 1965. Where the same information is given in IA and Gardīzī, it comes from Sallāmī (cf. *EI²*, s.v. "Sallāmī").
Tab.	al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje and others, Leiden, 1879–1901.
TB	*Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, ed. C. Schefer, Paris, 1892; ed. M. Riḍawī, Tehran 1351; tr. R.N. Frye, *The History of Bukhara*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954. References are given in that order, in the form *TB* 67 f./95 f. = 69.
YB	al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1892.
YT	al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, ed. M.Th. Houtsma, Leiden, 1883.

Zaryāb, "Nukātī" ʿA. Zaryāb Khūʾī, "Nukātī dar bāra-yi Muqannaʿ", in Y. Mahdawī and Ī. Afshār (eds), *Haftād maqāla: armaghān-i farhangī bih duktur Ghulām-Ḥusayn Ṣadīqī*, Tehran, 1369.

163 **Text**

خبر ولایت جبرئیل بن یحیی بر خراسان

1. 1 پس چون ابو جعفر بو مسلم را بکشت مردی را بیرون کرد نامش جبرئیل بن یحیی و از سرهنگان مبارز وبزرگ بود، و او را به خراسان فرستاد. 2 چون جبرئیل به خراسان آمد، همه خراسان برو راست بایستاد. 3 پس ازآنجا آهنگ سمرقند و بخارا کرد به فرمان ابو جعفر و در خراسان خلیفتی بنشاند وبرفت وعزم بخارا کرد.[1] 4 پس همه شهر پیش او باز آمدند و همه شهر او را مطیع شدند.[2] پس در بخارا خلیفتی بنشاند نامش عبد الملک. 5 پس از آنجا برفت و به در سمرقند آمد وسمرقند آن روز در دست مقنع آمده بود که ملک سغد بود.[3]

2. 1 چون ملک بنی امیه بشورید این مقنع خاقان به حیلت ملک سمرقند فرو گرفت.[4] 2 چون جبرئیل بن یحیی به در سمرقند رسید امیرمردی بود نامش مقنع[5] از قبل خاقان ملک سغد با سپاه بسیار به حرب بایستاد.[6]

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1 م، إ: + چون جبرئیل بن یحیی نزدیک بخارا رسید.

2 ف: پیش از "مطیع" سطر اضافه از ورق 378 الف دارد. س: وهمه شهراورا پیش مطیع آمدند. گ، إ، م، فتح: اورا بشهربردند. رص، فتح: + آنجا خراج بستد.

3 س، اس: از قبل خاقان ملک سغد. ل4، ل5، ل10: مردی بود ... از قبل ملک سغد خاقان. رص: مقنع ملک سغد. إ، م، گ ، ل1، ل2، ل3، ل11: مقنع ... که ملک ترک وفرغانه بود.

4 رص: + وسپهدار نامی آنجا نصب کرد. فتح: چون ملک بنی امیه بشورش آمد همچنانک [در] آذربایگان خوارج سربر کرده بودند و بعهد سفاح صافی شد سمرقند نیز خاقان که نام وی مقنع بود گرفته و سپهداررا نشانده بود.

5 فتح: سپهدار.

6 گ، ل1، ل2: به در سمرقند آمد وخاقان که ملک سغد بود بحرب بایستاد. إ، م: بدون " که ملک سغد بود".

Translation*

mid-170

Note: The notes given in this section are translations of those notes to the edition which are relevant to historians without Persian. They are given in the same numbering as in the edition and so are not consecutive.

Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā's Governorship of Khurāsān

1. 1. When Abū Jaʿfar killed Abū Muslim, he chose a man from among the great and brave officers by the name of Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā and sent him with an army to Khurāsān. 2. When Jibraʾīl came to Khurāsān, the whole of Khurāsān deferred to him. 3. From there he set out for Samarqand and Bukhārā at the order of Abū Jaʿfar. He appointed a deputy in Khurāsān and left, setting out for Bukhārā. 4. The whole city came out to meet him and became obedient to him. He appointed a deputy in Bukhārā by the name of ʿAbd al-Malik. 5. Then he went from there and came to the gate of Samarqand, which at that time had come into the hands of Muqannaʿ, who was king of Sogdia.[3]

2. 1. When the power of the Umayyads was overturned, this Muqannaʿ Khāqān [*sic*] had taken control of Samarqand by means of a ruse.[4] 2. When Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā reached the gate of Samarqand, the governor was a man whose | 171
name was Muqannaʿ[5] on behalf of the Khāqān, king of Sogdia. He got ready for battle with many troops.[6]

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* [Ed.: The edition and translation were printed consecutively in the original publication.]

3 S, AS: on behalf of the Khāqān, king of Sogdia. L4, L5, L10: a man … on behalf of the king of Sogdia, the Khāqān. RS: Muqannaʿ, king of Sogdia. E, M, G, L1, L2, L3, L11: Muqannaʿ … who was king of the Turks and Farghāna.

4 RS: + and appointed someone by the name of Sipahdār. FTH: just the Khārijites had rebelled [in] Azerbaijan when the power of the Umayyads collapsed, which was put right in the time of Saffāḥ, so Samarqand had also been taken by the Khāqān whose name was Muqannaʿ and who had installed the *sipahdār*.

5 FTH: Sipahdār.

6 G, L1, L2: He came to the gate of Samarqand and prepared to fight the Khāqān, who was king of Sogdia. E, M: the same, without "who was king of Sogdia".

3. 1 و شهر دو گروه شدند: گروهی بر هوای خاقان مقنع[7] وگروهی هوای جبرئیل بن یحیی. پس حرب کردند.[8] 2 وهر که از مخالف او بودند از سغدیان و ترکان همه بگریختند.[9]

4. 1 و ملک سغد مقنع چون بشنید که جبرئیل بن یحیی به سمرقند آمد و سمرقند بگرفت لشکر گرد کرد. 2 و از سمرقند بسیار پیش او رفته بودند، همه با او جمع آمدند و لشکری بی اندازه از اهل سغد و ترکان و سپیدجامگان که[10] قومی بودند از ترکان که بدین اسم معروف بودند. 3 پس مردی را بر ایشان امیر کرد[11] و به سمرقند فرستاد. چون به نزدیک سمرقند رسیدند بر در سمرقند فرود آمدند. 4 پس جبرئیل بن یحیی با لشکراز سمرقند بیرون آمد و بر کنارهٔ سمرقند لشکر فرود آورد و حرب کردند با سغدیان.[12] سپهدار مقنع به هزیمت شد واز ترکان وسپیدجامگان بسیار بکشتند[13] و جبرئیل هم آنجا بایستاد.[14]

5. 1 و خبر به مقنع شد. مردی بیرون کرد خون خواره نام او خارجه و ده هزار مرد بدو داد *وبه سمرقند فرستاد وبه حصار گرفت**.[15] 2 جبرئیل از خراسان مدد خواست.[16] *امیرخراسان سرهنگی را بیرون کرد، نام آن سرهنگ عقبه بن مسلم الازدی با هفت هزار مرد گزیده و مر اورا گفت به حرب مقنع شو به کش.[17] پس عقبه بیامد به دهی نام آن ده باغ مرغ. خبر به مقنع رفت.

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7 ل6: هوای خاقان. ل10، اس: هوای ملک سغد. گ، فتح، ل1، ل11، إ، م: هوای سپهدار. رص: ÷ این جمله.

8 اس: + وجبرئیل بن یحیی بشهر آمد و سمرقند بگرفت.

9 گ، إ، م، ل1، ل11: وازگروه مخالف بکشتند ودیگران بهزیمت شدند و سپهدار مقنع را بکشتند و جبرئیل بن یحیی به سمرقند اندر شد.

10 از فتح. بقیهٔ نسخه ها: و.

11 فتح: پس این سپهدار بر ایشان امیر کرد.

12 فتح: با سغدگان سپهدار مقنع و اورا بیافکند و دشمن روی بهزیمت نهاد. س: بسته وازمقنع به هزیمت شد.

13 فتح: و آنجا سیصد مرد از سپیدجامگان بکشتند و سیصد مرد از ترکان کشته آمد.

14 إ، م، فر: به سمرقند اندرشد. فتح: و جبرئیل نامه کرد به عبد الملک.

15 از إ، م، فر، فتح.

16 إ، م، فر، گ: جبرئیل بن یحیی کس به عبد الملک فرستاد و مدد خواست.

17 نسخه (ب): بکین.

3. 1. The city became divided into two groups, one in favour of Khāqān-i Muqannaʿ[7] and the other in favour of Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā. Then they fought.[8] 2. Whoever opposed him from among the Sogdians and the Turks all fled.[9]

4. 1. When the king of Sogdia, Muqannaʿ, heard that Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā had come to Samarqand and taken it, he assembled an army. 2. Many had gone from Samarqand to him and all came together with him, and an uncountable army of Sogdians, Turks and *Sapīdjāmagān* (Whiteclothed ones), who were a Turkish people known by that name. 3. Then he made a man their commander over them[10] and sent (them) to Samarqand. When they approached Samarqand, they camped at the gate of Samarqand. Then Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā came out from Samarqand with a large army and camped the army along the side of Samarqand. 4. They fought the Sogdians.[11] Muqannaʿ's commander (*sipahdār*) was defeated, and they killed many of the Turks and Whiteclothed ones, while Jibraʾīl stayed firm.

5. 1. The news reached Muqannaʿ, who chose a bloodthirsty man called Khārija and gave him 10,000 men, whereupon he sent him to Samarqand; he laid siege to it. 2. Jibraʾīl asked for help from Khurāsān,[16] and the governor of Khurāsān sent an officer by the name of ʿUqba b. Muslim al-Azdī with 7,000 chosen men and told him to go and fight Muqannaʿ in Kish. ʿUqba then went and came to a village called Bāgh-i Margh/Murgh. Muqannaʿ heard of this and

7 L6: in favour of the Khāqān. L10, AS: in favour of the king of Sogdia. G, FTH, E, M, L11: in favour of the *sipahdār*. Missing in RS.

8 AS: + and Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā entered the city and took Samarqand.

9 G, E, M, L1, L11: They killed many of the opposing group and routed others. They killed the *sipahdār* of Muqannaʿ and Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā entered the city.

10 FTH: then he made this *sipahdār* commander over them.

11 FTH: they fought Sughdigān, Muqannaʿ's commander (*sipahdār*), and overthrew him, and the enemy was defeated.

16 E, M, FR, G: Jibraʾīl sent somebody to ʿAbd al-Malik asking for help.

فیروز را بیرون کرد. 3 با عقبه برا بر آمد و حرب کردند.**[18] و عقبه حمله آورد با یاران خویش و مر
دشمن را به هزیمت کرد و خلقی را بکشتند از ترکان و سپید جامگان. پس عقبه آهنگ کش[19] کرد.
4 *مقنع نامه کرد به | خارجه و مر او را از سمرقند باز خواند.**[20] پس این خارجه حیلتی ساخت 164
و پیکی آمد سوی عقبه و نامه ای بدو داد. گفت[21] این نامه از که آوردی؟ گفت از ناون[22]
دهقان[23] ججدان. نامه را بر خواند.[24] 5 اندر نامه نوشته[25] بود که ایها الامیر شنیدم که خدای مر تو
را نصرت داد بر دشمن وبسیار شکر کردم. بدان که خارجه جبرئیل را بشکست واز سپاه او بسیار
بکشت وسمرقند غارت کرد وروی به تو نهاد.[26] 6 عقبه گمان برد که این حدیث راست است و از
این هیچ چیز[27] نبود. پس روی باز پس نهاد[28] وترکان از پس وی برفتند وغارت کردند و خزانهٔ او
بگرفتند 7 و عقبه به بلخ شد ونامه کرد به امیر خراسان از بلخ به مرو وازآن حال اورا[29] آگاه کرد.

18 از ب. ف: امیر خراسان که خلیفت او بود مردی را بفرستاد با ده هزار مرد نام وی عقبه بن مسلم و به یاری وی فرستاد پس دیگر باره برا بر آمدند با این عقبه. س: از "عقبه بن مسلم" تا "نامه ای بدو داد" افتادگی دارد.

19 از ب. ف، فت: باز گشتن. س افتادگی دارد.

20 از ب، فت، فتح، اس، رص. إ، م، فر، گ: خارجه از در سمرقند برفت. ف، س: ÷

21 ف، س، فت: وگفت.

22 از ب (حرف اول بدون نقطه). فتح: اول. بقیهٔ نسخه ها: ÷.

23 از ب و س. ف: دهقانان.

24 س: بخواندند.

25 س: نبشته.

26 گ، إ، م، فر: ویکی پیکی سوی عقبه بن مسلم آمد ونامه آورد وگفت این نامه جبرئیل بن یحیی فرستاد وگفت خدای تعالی مارا نصرت داد ودشمن بهزیمت شد.

27 س: خبر.

28 س: نهادند.

29 س: مر اورا.

sent Fīrūz. 3. He confronted ʿUqba and they fought.[18] ʿUqba charged with all his companions, defeated the enemy, and killed some Turks and Whiteclothed ones. Then ʿUqba set out for Kish.[19] 4. Muqannaʿ wrote a letter to Khārija, recalling him from Samarqand. This Khārija then engaged in a ruse. A messenger came to ʿUqba and gave him a letter. He [ʿUqba] said, "Whom did you get this letter from?" He [the messenger] said, "From Nāwan,[22] the *dihqān* of Ḥajdān." He read the letter. 5. In it was written, "O amir, I have heard that God has given you victory over the enemy and I have given many thanks for it. Know that | 172
Khārija has defeated Jibraʾīl and killed many of his troops and raided Samarqand, and is now on his way to you."[26] 6. ʿUqba believed that this statement was true, though none of it was. Then he set about returning. The Turks came after him, raided, and took his treasury. 7. ʿUqba went to Balkh and wrote a letter from there to Marw, to the governor of Khurāsān, and informed him of the situation.

18 F: The governor of Khurāsān, who was his deputy, sent a man with 10,000 men whose name was ʿUqba b. Muslim and sent him to assist him. So once again they confronted this ʿUqba.

19 F, FT: Then ʿUqba set about to return.

22 Thus B (*nʾwn*, first letter is undotted); FTH, the only other manuscript to give the name, has *ʿvl*.

26 G, E, M, FR: A messenger came to ʿUqba b. Muslim, bearing a letter, and said, "Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā sent this letter saying that God, exalted is He, has given us victory and defeated the enemy."

6. 1 عبد الملک امیر خراسان نامه کرد *به شیعت بن صالح خلیفت داود بن داود به بلخ**[30] ونامه کرد به حاجم الذهلی[31] امیر ترمذ و نامه کرد سوی عمرو بن معقل بن عقیل[32] امیر چغانیان ومر ایشان را بفرمود که بروید. پس لشکر همه به ترمذ گرد آمدند چهارده هزار مرد. 2 *مقنع سرجمه بیرون کرد و خشوی را و کیاک غوری[33] را بیرون کرد**[34] با پانزده هزار مرد. 3 بیامدند و برابر یک دیگر فرود آمدند. *سرجمه برادر خود را گفت تو سوی عمرو بن عقیل[35] رو و بگوی پیش وی که من توبه کردم از نصرت مقنع و دانستم که وی دروغ می گوید، فردا ترکان را جدا به پای کنم و خود با اهل خود به زنهار توآیم. عمرو بن عقیل شاد شد چون برادر سرجمه بیامد و این حدیث بگفت، مر او را گفت نیک آید اگر بکنی این که همی گویی. و عمرو کسان را آگاه کرد.[36] 4 پس برادر سرجمه باز گشت و دیگر روز ترکان را به یک سو به پای کرد**[37] و گفت چون من حمله کنم شما از یک سوی حمله کنید. چنان کردند و شمشیر اندر نهادند و از مسلمانان بسیار بکشتند و دیگر به هزیمت شدند.

30 از فت و فتح. ف، ب: نامه کرد ببلخ بصالح بن داؤد امیر بلخ. س: بصالح بن دیلم و امیر بلخ. اس: بشعیب بن صالح.

31 از ب (حاجم الدهیلت؟). فتح: حماجم الدهل. فت: حاحم الدحل (؟). ف، س: جماجم. رص: ÷.

32 از فت. ف، فتح، س، اس: ÷ بن معقل. ب: عمرو حمیل.

33 فت، فتح: کیکان عربی. ب: کیال (کیاک؟) عربی.

34 از فت، ب. ف، س: مقنع سرجمه را بفرستاد (س: + که سپهداراو بود).

35 ب اینجا و بعد: حمیل.

36 ف: کساندلر(؟).

37 از ب. ف، س: سرجمه برادر خویش را از یکسوی بپای کرد و گفت. فت، فتح: سرجمه برادر خویش را گفت اگر نیک آید این کار باید که بکنی این که همی گویی و عمر کسان را بیرون کرد و برادر سرجمه باز گشت و دیگر روز ترکان از یکسوی بپای کرد و گفت.

6. 1. ʿAbd al-Malik, the governor of Khurāsān, wrote a letter to Balkh to *Shyʿt* b. Ṣāliḥ, the deputy of Dāwūd b. Dāwūd in Balkh, and *Ḥ'jm* al-Dhuhlī,[31] amir of Tirmidh, and to ʿAmr b. Maʿqil b. ʿAqīl, amir of Chaghāniyān, ordering them to go. The whole army came together at Tirmidh, fourteen thousand strong. 2. Al-Muqannaʿ sent Sarjama, Khashawī, and Kayyāk Ghūrī with fifteen thousand men. 3. They came and camped in front of each other. Sarjama said to his brother: go to ʿAmr b. ʿAqīl and say to him, "I have repented of my assistance to Muqannaʿ and have realized that he is a liar. Tomorrow I will arrange the Turks separately and come into your protection with my family." ʿAmr b. ʿAqīl was pleased when Sarjama's brother came and said this, and he replied, "It will be good if you do what you say." ʿAmr informed his people. Then Sarjama's brother returned, and the next day he arranged the Turks on one side and said, "When I attack, you should attack from an(other) side." This is what they did, and they wielded their swords, killing many Muslims, while others were routed.

31 From B, possibly Dahīlat. FTH: Ḥamājam al-Dahl. FT: Ḥāḥam al-Daḥl (?). FS: Jamājam.

7. 1 پس مقنع نامه کرد به سرجمه که به چغانیان شو. سرجمه به چغانیان آمد وچغانیان به حصار گرفت ویک ماه چغانیان به حصار داشت و هر روزی یک دو دیه غارت همی کردند. 2 و خارجه به در سمرقند[38] بود و سرجمه به چغانیان بود.[39]

8. 1 مقنع مردی را نام او حجمی بیرون کرد[40] با سه هزار مرد و او را گفت برو و نخشب بگیر. او به در نخشب آمد. 2 نخشبیان همه خرد و بزرگ متفق شدند و بیعت کردند و توانگران خواربار فراخ کردند[41] از بیم قحط و همه به حرب بیرون آمدند و حرب اندر گرفتند. 3 حجمی دانست که
165 چیزی نتواند کردن. تدبیر کردند وحجمی را گفتند مردی است دهقان دراین ده تمودر[42] نام او | احمد ویکی خداوند خواسته است،[43] بباید رفتن وغارت کردن. پس از در نخشب بدین دیه آمدند و آن دیه به حصار گرفتند.[44] 4 ودرآن دیه حصاری بود محکم. حجمی بفرمود تا گرد بر گرد حصار آب اندر افکندند تا مگر حصار ویران شود. پس حصار محکمتر شد و احمد بن ابی بکر بساخت با مردمان خویش ویک شب ناگاه بیرون آمدند وآن همه سپیدجامگان را بکشتند و حجمی را به دار کردند اندر آن دیه.[45]

9. 1 پس خبر به مقنع آمد، غمناک شد. 2 و حجمی را برادری بود دهقان به[46] حجدان بود. مقنع نامه کرد واو را گفت حیلتی کن تا مگر جبرئیل بن یحیی را از سمرقند بیرون توانی آوردن. 3

38 فت: بسمرقند.

39 فر، گ، ل1، ل2، ل3، ل9، ل11: پس مقنع مردی را بیرون فرستاد نامش سرجمه بمدد خارجه و گفت از چغانیان واز هر جانبی سپاه گرد کن. او برفت و سپاه گرد همی آورد و خارجه بسمرقند بود.

40 رص: مقنع ترکی دیگر بفرستاد.

41 فتح: بیرون افکندند. س: خودرا نان فراخ کردند.

42 س: نمودر. ب، اس: مردی. ل3، ل1، فتح: مودی. ل4: نمودی. ل1، فت، رص، إ، م، فر: ÷.

43 س: ÷ یکی.

44 فت، إ، م، فر، گ: پس برفتند از نخشب و بمودی (موری/مردی) آمدند.

45 فت: بدر آن دیه.

46 إ، م، فر، گ: ÷ به. فر: + نام او.

7. 1. Then Muqannaʿ wrote a letter to Sarjama, telling him to go to Chaghāniyān. Sarjama came to Chaghāniyān and laid siege to it; for one month he laid siege to Chaghāniyān, and every day they would raid one or two villages. 2. Khārija was at the gate of Samarqand and Sarjama was in Chaghāniyān.[39]

8. 1. Al-Muqannaʿ then sent a man by the name of Ḥajamī[40] with 3,000 men and told him to go and take Nakhshab, so he came to the gate of Nakhshab. 2. All the Nakhshabīs, great and small, came to an agreement and made a compact (to resist) and the wealthy men made foodstuffs plentiful for fear of famine, and they all came out for war and began to fight. 3. Ḥajamī knew that he could do nothing. They deliberated and said to Ḥajamī, "There is a man, a *dihqān* in the village of Tamūdar[42] by the name of Aḥmad, who has many possessions; we should go there and raid." So they went from the gate of Nakhshab and came to this village and laid siege to it. 4. In that village there was a strong fortress. Ḥajamī ordered them to throw water around that fortress so that maybe it would be destroyed. But the fortress only became stronger. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr came to | an agreement with his men. One night they suddenly came out and 173
killed all these Whiteclothed ones and hanged Ḥajamī in that village.

9. 1. The news reached Muqannaʿ, who was grieved. 2. Ḥajamī had a brother, a *dihqān* in Ḥajdān. Muqannaʿ wrote him a letter and told him to devise a ruse to make Jibraʾīl come out of Samarqand. 3. That *dihqān* wrote a letter to Jibraʾīl

39 FR, L1, L2, L3, L9: Then Muqannaʿ sent a man by the name of Sarjama to reinforce Khārija and told him to gather troops from Chaghāniyān and everywhere. He went and gathered troops while Khārija was at Samarqand.

40 RS: Muqannaʿ sent another Turk.

42 Other MSS have Namūdār, Mardī and Mūdī.

آن دهقان نامه کرد سوی جبرئیل[47] وگفت یا[48] امیر! بیچاره شدیم از بس غارت که به میان ما اندر است از جور سپیدجامگان. اگر امیر بیند ما را سواران فرستد تا ما با عیالان[49] به سمرقند آییم و امیر را ثواب بسیار بود. 4 پس جبرئیل نامه بر خواند برادر را با سپاه بسیار بفرستاد. 5 چون دهقان دانست که برادر جبرئیل آمد پیش او باز شد و گفت یا امیر! ترکان آب از ما بیفکنده اند و چندین روز است تا خلق از تشنگی همی میرند، امیر همچنین تا سر وادی برود تا سر آب مگر آب[50] یابیم. 6 یزید بن یحیی گفت مردی باید تا دلیل باشد. مردی از یارانش نام وی نصر گفت ای امیر! این مرد مکر خواهد کردن. خواهی تا بدانی دلیل را[51] بخوان و بگوی سر آب شما دانید؟[52] 7 پس بدانست که مکر است و طلایه[53] بیرون آمد و بتاختند.[54] پس طلایه باز آمد وگفت[55] دشمن[56] آمد بی اندازه و به وادی اندر لشکرست به کمین. 8 پس دهقان هجدان بیامد و آن سپاه ازکمین بیرون آمدند وترکان از دگر سوی بیامدند و حربی کردند بزرگ. 9 و *یزید بن**[57] یحیی به دو جای خسته شد و روی به هزیمت نهاد و همی آمد تا به راه به یکی[58] کوشک ویران رسید. اندر آنجا شد. پس دشمن ایشان را گرد بگرفت وآن روز حرب کردند. 10 چون شب اندر آمد ایشان به گوشه ای رفتند و ترکان از هر سوی حصار بگرفتند، ویزید بمرد. 11 چون جبرئیل دید که برادرش دیر همی آید خود بر نشست با سپاه واز سمرقند بیرون آمد تا برسید بدان کوشک ویران، ترکان را دید که حرب همی کردند. 12

47 س: + بن یحیی.
48 س: ای.
49 فت: عیاران.
50 س: ÷ آب.
51 فتح: ولیرد را.
52 رص: + چون سوال کرد.
53 ف: + به آب.
54 إ، م، گ: طلایه را بفرستاد ونیافتاد/(گ) بتاختند.
55 س: گفتند.
56 س: دشمنی.
57 از ب و اس. ف، فت، فتح، س: ÷.
58 س: بریکی.

and said, "O amir, we have been reduced to misery by the many raids that we are suffering as a result of the oppression of the Whiteclothed ones. If the amir saw fit to send us some horsemen so that we could come to Samarqand with our families, the amir would earn great reward." 4. When Jibraʾīl read the letter, he sent his brother with many troops. 5. When the *dihqān* knew that Jibraʾīl's brother had come, he went out to receive him and said, "O amir, the Turks have cut off our water, for some days people have been dying of thirst. If the amir would proceed to the top of the valley and the mainspring of the water, maybe we would find water." 6. Yazīd b. Yaḥyā said, "We need a man to guide us." A man from among his companions by the name of Naṣr said, "O amir, this man wants to play a trick. If you want to know, call the guide and ask him whether he knows where the wellspring of the water is." 7. Then he realized that it was a trick, and the scouts went out and ran around. The scouts came back and said, "The enemy has come in uncountable numbers and an army is lying in ambush in the valley." 8. Then the *dihqān* of Ḥajdān came, the troops came out of their ambush, and the Turks came from another direction and engaged in a big battle. 9. Yazīd b. Yaḥyā was wounded in two places and turned back in retreat until he came to a ruined villa on the road. He went inside, then the enemy surrounded them, and they engaged in battle that day. 10. When night fell they went into a corner, with the Turks besieging them from all sides, and Yazīd b. Yaḥyā died. 11. When Jibraʾīl saw that his brother was late in coming, he himself got mounted and left Samarqand with an army, and came to that ruined villa, where he saw the Turks engaged in battle. 12. Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā shouted

جبرئیل بن یحیی[59] با سپاه تکبیر کردند.[60] چون نصر بن لیث[61] بانگ تکبیر شنید گفت بشارت[62] که امیر آمد. 13 خویشتن را از آن ویران بیرون افکندند وحمله کردند وسپیدجامگان به هزیمت شدند وجبرئیل ترکان را به هزیمت کرد و دهقان حجدان را بکشت و آن دیگران به هزیمت شدند. 14 و آنگاه جبرئیل بن یحیی برادر را به سمرقند برد وبه گور[63] کرد.

166 **10.** 1 پس مقنع به یاری دهقان نیره را[64] بیرون کرد وبه سمرقند فرستاد با چهارده[65] هزار مرد[66] و سمرقند را به حصار گرفتند. 2 پس مقنع نامه کرد به خلخ[67] خاقان و او را بخواند به غارت کردن سمرقند.[68] پس خلخ خاقان بیامد وهمه یکی شدند. 3 و برادری بود خلخ خاقان را نام وی قیل،[69] مردی مبارز بود. بیرون آمد[70] و مبارز خواست. لیث بن نصر پیش وی شد و مبارزت نمود[71] و وی را بکشت. 4 پس نیره/نبره دهقان[72] بیرون آمد. لیث بن نصر[73] برو حمله کرد و او را نیز

59 س: جبرئیل.

60 س: کرد. ب: + وحمله کردند.

61 ف: + چون.

62 ف: + آمد.

63 فر، ل1، ل3، ل9، ل11: دفن.

64 ف: نبره. فت، فتح، ب: پس مقنع دهقان بیاری نیره/نبره ... [بدون نقطه]. فر، گ: دهقان را نامش نیره. إ، م: مردی را نامش بره. اس: مردی نام او نیرک. رص: نیزه بن دهقان (؟).

65 إ، م، فر، گ: چهار.

66 فتح: + دهقان بیاری آمد. ف: + بیاری دهقان.

67 فر: ÷ خلخ. ب، گ: خلج.

68 فر: بیاری. إ، م: بتاری.

69 از فت و س. ف، فتح، إ، م، گ، اس، رص: فیل. ب: قل.

70 س: ÷ بیرون آمد. اس: + وسمرقند را بحصار گرفتند.

71 س: بنمود.

72 از فت. ف، فتح، س: نبره/نیره بن دهقان. فر، گ: دهقان نیره. إ، م: ÷.

73 س: ÷ بن نصر.

allāhu akbar with the troops, and when Naṣr b. Layth heard the sound of the *takbīr*, he said, "Good news, the amir has come." 13. They threw themselves out of the ruin and attacked; the Whiteclothed ones were defeated; Jibraʾīl routed the Turks and killed the *dihqān* of Ḥajdān, and the others were defeated. 14. Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā then carried his brother to Samarqand and put him in a tomb.

10. 1. Then Muqannaʿ sent the *dihqān* of Nīra/Nabra[64] to Samarqand with 14,000 men to help, and they laid siege to Samarqand. 2. Muqannaʿ wrote to Khallukh Khāqān and called upon him to attack Samarqand. Khallukh Khāqān came, and they all got together. 3. Khallukh Khāqān had a brother by the name of Qīl, a great warrior. He asked for single combat and Layth b. Naṣr went up to him and fought single combat with him and killed him. 4. Then Nīra/Nabra the

64 Other MSS have Nīza and Nīrak.

بکشت ومسلمانان شادی کردند 5 وترکان از پس مسلمانان به سمرقند اندر شدند. پس چون شب اندر آمد سمرقند را قتل و غارت کردند.[74]

11. 1 و ابو جعفر[75] را از چنین حال آگاه کردند. بگریست بر مصیبت مسلمانان. 2 پس معاذ بن مسلم را بیرون کرد بر امیری خراسان و او را گفت برو و همه عمالان[76] عبد الملک را معزول کن مگر جبرئیل بن یحیی که او مردی[77] مبارک است و جهد کن به حرب دشمن.[78] 3 چون معاذ بن مسلم به مرو آمد نامه کرد به سعید الحرشی[79] امیرهراة[80] و او را سوی خویش خواند. سعید[81] گفت که من از پس تو به بخارا آیم. 4 معاذ با سپاه[82] بیامد وجبرئیل با سپاه به سمرقند آمد درحصار.[83]

74 چنین است ف، فتح، س. بند 5 در فت: وترکان بسمرقند اندر پس چون شب اندر آمد مسلمانان از لشکر مقنع هزیمت شدند و ایشان سمرقند را قتل و غارت کردند. در ب: و بسمرقند اندر شدند پس چون شب اندر آمد لشکر مقنع هزیمت شدند. در رص: چون شب در آمد از راهی دیگر در سمرقند رفتند و قتل وغارت کردند. در فر، گ، ل1، ل11، إ، م: وترکان از مسلمانان بکشتند ومسلمانان بهزیمت شدند وترکان حیلتی ساختند و بسمرقند اندر شدند وغارت وقتل کردند. (إ، م: ÷ ومسلمانان بهزیمت شدند.)

75 چنین است ف، س، رص، إ، م، فر، گ، ل1–11. فت: امیر المومنین. ب: مقنع.

76 ف، فتح، س: عیالان. فت، ب: عیالان، به عمالان تصحیح شده. گ، ل1، ل11، إ، م، فز: عبد الملک را معزول کن وهمه کسان اورا.

77 س: ÷ مردی.

78 فت، فتح، ب: + بطاقت.

79 همهٔ نسخه ها بجز فت: الجرشی.

80 از ب. س: اهوار. ف، فت، فتح، اس، رص: اهواز. گ، ل1، ل11، إ، م، فز: کرمان.

81 س، فت: بسعید/سعید الحرشی را.

82 ب: + بابوی/بابوخت (؟، بدون نقطه).

83 فز: وجبرئیل بن یحیی نیز با سپاه و بردرسمرقند بیامد. گ، م، إ: وجبرئیل بن یحیی نیز با سپاه از در سمرقند بیامد. شاید: و جبرئیل بن یحیی با سپاه به در سمرقند آمد و سمرقند را به حصار گرفت (؟).

dihqān came forth and Layth b. Naṣr attacked and killed him too. The Muslims rejoiced. 5. The Turks followed the Muslims into Samarqand. When night fell, they killed and raided in Samarqand.[74]

11. 1. They informed Abū Jaʿfar of this,[75] and he wept over the affliction of 174
the Muslims. 2. Then he appointed Muʿādh b. Muslim as governor of Khurāsān and said to him, "Go and dismiss ʿAbd al-Malik and all his governors except for Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā, who is a blessed man; and work hard at the war against the enemy." 3. When Muʿādh b. Muslim came to Marw, he wrote a letter to Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī, the amir of Herat,[80] and told him to come. Saʿīd said that he would join him in Bukhārā. 4. Muʿādh came with troops[82] and Jibraʾīl came to Samarqand with troops, in siege.[83]

74 Thus F, FTH and S. Paragraph 5 in FT: and the Turks (got) inside Samarqand; when evening fell the Muslims were defeated by Muqannaʿ's army, and they killed and raided Samarqand. In B: and they got into Samarqand; when evening fell, Muqannaʿ's army was defeated. In RS: When evening fell, they went by another route to Samarqand and raided and killed. In FR, G, L1, L11, E, M: and the Turks killed many of the Muslims, and the Muslims were defeated. The Turks made a ruse and got into Samarqand and raided and killed. (E, M: ÷ and the Muslims were defeated.)

75 Thus F, S, RS, G, FR, E, M, L1–11. FT: Commander of the Faithful. B: Muqannaʿ.

80 Thus B. S: Ahwār. F, FT, RS: Ahwāz. G, L1, L11, E, M, FR: Kirmān.

82 B adds "to *'bwy/'bwkht*".

83 FR: Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā also with troops and came on the gate of Samarqand. G, M, E: and Jibraʾīl also came with troops from the gate of Samarqand. Perhaps: Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā went with troops to the gate of Samarqand and laid siege to Samarqand (?).

12. 1 و کیاک[84] غوری را با خلخ[85] خاقان حدیث رفت. خلخ خاقان گفت غنیمت سمرقند مراست.[86] کیاک غوری گفت حرب من کردم تو را چه دهم؟ 2 کیاک یاران خویش را گفت ما را بباید رفتن تا میان پیکند راه بگیریم بر سپاه مسلمانان وغارت کنیم و برویم.[87] پس بیامدند و به بیابان اندر پنهان شدند. 3 معاذ بن مسلم سپاه تعبیه کرد وخیل خیل همی فرستاد به پیکند و کیاک غوری *روی بیرون آمدن ندید تا**[88] معاذ بن مسلم[89] بیامد با چهار هزار مرد خاصه. کیاک[90]
167 خویشتن برو افکند. 4 معاذ تکبیر | گفت و ترس و بیم[91] اندر دل ترکان افکند[92] و روی به هزیمت نهادند و مسلمانان شمشیراندر نهادند و سیصد مرد از ترکان بکشتند و سرها به بخارا آوردند. 5 و مردمان معاذ *را بسیار دعا کردند و**[93] گرد آمدند به بخارا، و سعید الحرشی بیامد با سپاه، و روزی به سپاه بداد و منجنیقها[94] بساخت و سه هزار مرد که کنده کنند[95] و حفره زنند و ده[96] هزارگوسفند ببرد با خویشتن.

13. 1 معاذ وی را گفت که بفروش این گوسفندان که ترکان بدین رغبت کنند. سعید گفت اگر ربیعه و مضر گرد آیند چون کوهی پشمی ازین گوسفند نتوانند ستدن.[97] معاذ[98] گفت هر چه

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84 از ف‌ت، فر، گ، ل1. ف، س، ب، اس، رص: کیال. إ، م: کیان.

85 ب، ل1، اس: خلج.

86 س: + که.

87 س: ÷ و برویم.

88 از ب. ف، فتح، س: با سپاه بیرون آمد با.

89 س: جمله را تکرار می کند. بعد: با چهار هزار مرد خارجه خویشتن بر وی.

90 از ب (کیال).

91 س: تکبیر کرد و گفت خدای را ترسیم وهم. ب: تکبیر کرد، خدا عز وجل ترس وبیم.

92 ف: اندرافکند.

93 از ب (+ سیصد مرد با معاذ).

94 س: منجنیقات. فت: مجانیق.

95 س: را گفتند که کنده کنند.

96 إ، م: سه.

97 ف: ستادن. فر: برد.

98 س: ÷.

12. 1. Kayyāk Ghūrī spoke with Khallukh[84] Khāqān. Khallukh Khāqān said, "The spoils of Samarqand are mine." Kayyāk Ghūrī said, "I did the fighting, why should I give you anything?" 2. Kayyāk said to his companions, "We should go and occupy the road to Paykand against the Muslim troops and raid them (from there) and (then) leave." Then they went and hid themselves in the desert. 3. Muʿādh b. Muslim put his troops in battle order and sent the cavalry to Paykand, one group after another. Kayyāk Ghūrī did not see fit to come out until Muʿādh b. Muslim came with 4,000 men from his special troops. Kayyāk threw himself at him. 4. Muʿādh said the *takbīr* and threw fear and terror into the hearts of the Turks. They turned about fleeing and the Muslims put them to the sword, killing 300 men from among the Turks, and brought the heads to Bukhārā. 5. People gave much praise to Muʿādh. They assembled at Bukhārā, and Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī came with an army, and he gave the troops their pay. He constructed mangonels and took with him 3,000 men who were diggers of trenches and pits, as well as 10,000 sheep.

13. 1. Muʿādh told Saʿīd to sell these sheep, as they would attract the Turks. Saʿīd said, "If Rabīʿa and Muḍar were to get together like a mountain, they would not be able to take a hair from these sheep." Muʿādh said, "Whatever comes to

84 B, L1: Khalaj.

آید ما را از غنیمت آید. 2 پس آنگاه لشکر بر گرفت و برفت و سعید را بر مقدمه کرد و آن گوسفند به صد سوار سپرده بود. 3 ترکان بیامدند و آن گوسفندان همه ببردند. سعید حمله کرد و گوشه ای از ترکان به حرب بایستادند و گوشه ای گوسفند همی راندند. 4 معاذ بن مسلم یکی کنده یافت. آنجا فرود آمد وکس فرستاد سوی سعید و مر او را باز خواند. 5 سعید گفت چگونه آیم سوی تو که گوسفندان ترکان ببردند همه؟ مرا سپاه ده تا گوسفند[99] خویش باز آرم. معاذ گفت لعنت بر گوسفندت[100] باد.

14. 1 سعید از کینه معاذ بگذاشت تا ترکان وسپیدجامگان او را[101] به حصار گرفتند. آن مسلمانان[102] بدان کنده اندر تشنه شدند و مسلمانان به آب نیارستن رفتن. 2 پس ترکانی[103] بیامد سوی معاذ و نامهٔ هاشم بن حرب[104] آورد امیر چاچ[105] که من آمدم با سپاه به یاری امیر. ترکانان را[106] گفتند ما را دستوری دهید[107] تا به آب رویم.3 برفتند و به یکی کنده فرود آمدند و اسبی چند[108] آن جایگه گرد کردند.[109] پس از آن ده سوار[110] به طمع اسب بیامدند. پنج ترک را[111] بکشتند. معاذ را عجب آمد. 4 *چون سپاه ها برسیدند به مدد معاذ،**[112] آنگاه سپاه برفت و به سمرقند آمد وهمه سپاه یکی شدند و به حرب برا بر آمدند. 5 سپیدجامگان به هزیمت شدند ومسلمانان

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99 س، فت: گوسفندان.

100 از فت. ف: گوسفندان. س: سوگندت.

101 إ، م، فر. ف، فت: ÷. س، فتح: سپیدجامگان را. رص: ترکان ایشان را در حصار گرفتند.

102 از ب، س، گ. ف، فت، فتح: مسلمانان را.

103 س: ترکمان. ب: ترکمانان. فت: ترکان. إ: ترکانی/ترکمانی؟ رص: سعید.

104 فت: ؟؟ (هاشم، تغییر کرده) بن کعب.

105 ف: جاج/جلج. ل11: حجاج. بقیهٔ نسخه ها: حاج.

106 از فت. ف: ترکمان. س: ترکان آن (؟). ب: آن ترکمانان.

107 از فت. ف، س: ده.

108 س، ب، اس: چهار و پنج.

109 فت، ب: آنجا یله کردند.

110 ب: ترکمانان ده سوار.

111 س، فت، ب: + بگرفتند و.

112 از فر، گ، ل1، ل2، ل3، ل9، ل11.

us, comes from booty." 2. Then he decamped with the army and went. He put Saʿīd over the vanguard and the sheep were entrusted to a hundred horsemen. 3. The Turks came and took all those sheep. Saʿīd attacked, and one party of the Turks engaged in battle while another drove the sheep away. 4. Muʿādh found a trench and dismounted there, and sent somebody to Saʿīd, telling him to come. 5. Saʿīd said, "How can I come to you when the Turks have carried away all the sheep? Give me troops so that I can get my sheep back." Muʿādh said, "Damn your sheep!"

14. 1. Saʿīd abandoned Muʿādh out of rancour so that the Turks and White- 175
clothed ones besieged him. The Muslims in that trench suffered thirst, they could not go to the water. 2. Then a Turkoman came to Muʿādh, bringing a letter from Hāshim b. Ḥarb, the amir of Shāsh, saying that he was coming with troops to assist the amir. They asked the Turkomans to give them permission to go to the water. 3. They went and dismounted in a trench, where they assembled[109] some horses; thereafter ten horsemen who coveted the horses came; they took five Turks and killed them. Muʿādh was (pleasantly) surprised. 4. When the troops arrived to reinforce Muʿādh, the army went and came to Samarqand, where all the troops were united and confronted (the enemy) for battle. 5. The Whiteclothed ones were routed and the Muslims followed them, setting fire to

109 FT, B: let loose.

از پس ایشان بشدند وآتش بدان دیه[113] اندر زدند و خارجه با هزار مرد به شب اندر بگریخت 6 پس سرهنگی *با گروهی**[114] از آن مقنع به زنهار آمد. چون پیش معاذ آمدند خویشتن را برو افکندند که معاذ را بکشند. غلامان گرد بگرفتند وهمه را پاک بکشتند. 7 معاذ مؤید[115] آمد و منصور به سمرقند شد.

15. 1 پس این خبر به مقنع آمد غمگین شد. پس مقنع کسان خویش همه، مرد و زن، به قلعهٔ نوا[کت][116] گرد کرد، 2 و ده سال بود تا آنجا طعام وعلف گرد همی کرد. و دو قلعه بود اندر یک دیگر سخت محکم.[117]

168 **16.** 1 *پس معاذ بن مسلم جبرئیل بن یحیی به سمرقند خلیفه کرد**[118] و خود روی به مقنع نهاد. 2 پس مردی را از پیش خود بفرستاد سوی مقنع تا او را به خدای خواند مگر باز گردد از دین کافری. چون آن مرد باز برمعاذ آمد، گفت چون دیدی آن ملعون را؟ 3 گفت به قلعه ای رسیدم راه ها صعب و مرا در آن قلعه بداشتند یک روز. پس کسی آمد و مرا ببردند به یکی[119] خانهٔ آراسته به دیبا وپرده از پیش خانه آویخته وغلامی خوب روی بر[120] پرده[121] ایستاده. 4 آواز کرد که سید[122] همی گوید که به چه کار آمدی؟ گفت من دل به مرگ بنهادم، گفتم به خدایی دعوی همی کنی و ندانی که من کی ام و به چه کار آمدم؟ 5 و گفتم چه قدرت بود تو را چون ضعیفان به

113 از فت. س، ف: ده. رص: دیه ایشان.

114 از إ، م، فر، گ. فتح: با سواری چند.

115 از ب. بقیهٔ نسخه ها: بمرو.

116 از ب.

117 ب: هریک ازیکدیگر سختتر و محکم بود.

118 از فت (خلیفت)، إ، م، فر. ف: جبرئیل یحیی بسمرقند خلیفه کرد. فتح، س: معد بن مسلم/خبر بسمرقند خلیفه کرد. رص: معاذ در مرو خلیفه بنشاند.

119 از فت و س. ف: بنزدیک یکی.

120 از ب، فت، فتح، گ. ف، س: پس.

121 گ: در. فتح: درپرده.

122 اس: ملک.

that village, and Khārija fled at night with a thousand men. 6. Then a commander with a group of Muqannaʿ's (men) asked for protection. When they came before Muʿādh they threw themselves at him in order to kill him. The *ghulām*s surrounded them and killed every single one of them. 7. Muʿādh came with (divine) support and entered Samarqand as the victor.

15. 1. Then the news reached Muqannaʿ and he was grieved. He assembled all his followers, men and women, in the castle of Nawā[kit], 2. where he had been gathering food and fodder for ten years. It was two castles, one inside the other, and extremely strong.

16. 1. Then Muʿādh b. Muslim made Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā his deputy in Samarqand and set off for Muqannaʿ himself. 2. He sent a man on his behalf to Muqannaʿ to call him to God in the hope that he would return from unbelief. When that man came back to Muʿādh, he [Muʿādh] asked, "How did you find that accursed man?" 3. He said, "I reached a castle, the roads were difficult, and they kept me in that castle for a day. Then somebody came and took me to a room decorated with silk, with a curtain hung in front of it and a good-looking slaveboy standing by the curtain. 4. He [Muqannaʿ] shouted, 'The lord [*sayyid*] says, what have you come for?'" He [the narrator] said, "I prepared for death and said, 'You claim to be God and yet you do not know who I am and what I have come for?' 5. I also said, 'What power do you have, you who came into this castle like (other)

قلعه اندر آمدی؟ آواز داد که من قادرم[123] بر بندگان خویش. 6 گفت من او را پند دادم و به دین خواندم. هر چند بیش گفتم او دعوی بلندتر کرد. پس آن وقت مرا دست بگرفت و بر خارجه[124] آورد و گفت این را بدرقه کن تا کس او را نیازارد.

17. 1 وچون مرد معاذ را این حدیث بگفت معاذ هم آنگاه سپاه عرض کرد و داود بن داود[125] را از یک سو بفرستاد و معاذ از دیگر سو[126] خود بیامد و قلعه اندر میان گرفتند و از دو روی حرب آغاز کردند تا زمستان اندر آمد[127] 2 و معاذ داود بن داود را گفت به بلخ رو و بهار ساخت کن که عرب به سرما کار نتوانند کردن. 3 پس داود را گسیل کرد و چون داود باز گشت سپیدجامگان به راه او آمدند[128] و حرب کردند و داود مر سپیدجامگان را بشکست و بسیاری بکشت و به کش رفت و ازکش به بلخ رفت و معاذ به سمرقند رفت.[129]

18. 1 و سعید الحرشی هر روزی نامه همی کردی به مهدی[130] و از معاذ گله کردی تا نامه آمد به معاذ که سپاه به سعید الحرشی سپار و هر چه باید مر او را ده[131] که حرب مقنع او کند و یکی نامه سوی سعید آمد و گفت نگر تا سستی نکنی به حرب[132] دشمن. معاذ همه سپاه به سعید سپرد[133]

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123 ب، فتح: رحیم.

124 س: یک سطر افتادگی دارد.

125 ب، اینجا و بعد: داود بن ابی داود.

126 س، فتح: روی.

127 فت، فتح، ب، گ: + و سرما بگرفت.

128 ب: و معاذ چون داود باز گشت سپیدجامگان بدم/برم آمدند.

129 فتح، رص: + و در این سال بو جعفر منصور بمرد و ولی عهد پسرش مهدی بود او بخلیفتی بنشست.

130 کذا ب، فت، رص، إ، م، فر، گ، ل1، ل11. ف، س: ابو جعفر.

131 ف: بده.

132 فتح، اس: هلاک.

133 گ، ل1، ل11، إ، م، فر: + وسبب آن بود کی بو جعفر در این سال بمرد ومهدی پسرش بنشست و امیری خراسان مر سعید را داد.

weak (human beings)?' He shouted, 'I have power over my servants.'" 6. He [the narrator] said, "I gave him advice and called him to the religion. The more I said, the louder he shouted. Then he [the slave] took me by the hand and led me to Khārija, saying, 'Escort this man so that nobody harms him.'"

17. 1. When the man had told Muʿādh this story, Muʿādh inspected the troops and sent Dāwūd b. Dāwūd[125] from one side while coming from another side himself. They surrounded the castle and started making war on it from both sides until winter came. 2. Muʿādh told Dāwūd b. Dāwūd to go to Balkh and get ready in spring, since the Arabs cannot do anything in the cold. 3. Then he sent Dāwūd away, and when Dāwūd retired, the Whiteclothed ones came and attacked him on the way, but he defeated them and killed | many of them and 176
went to Kish, and from there to Balkh, while Muʿādh went to Samarqand.[129]

18. 1. Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī sent a letter to Mahdī[130] every day complaining about Muʿādh until a letter came to Muʿādh telling him to put Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī in charge of the army and give him everything he required so that he could lead the war against Muqannaʿ, and a letter came to Saʿīd telling him not to be remiss in the war against the enemy. Muʿādh entrusted all the troops to him[133] and gave

125 B, here and thereafter: Dāwūd b. Abī Dāwūd.

129 RS: + In this year Abū Jaʿfar Manṣūr died; the heir apparent was his son, Mahdī, and he became caliph.

130 Thus B, FT, RS, E, M, FR, L1, L11. F, S: Abū Jaʿfar.

133 G, L1, L11, E, M, FR: + The reason for that was that Abū Jaʿfar died in that year and his son Mahdī succeeded him. He gave the governorship of Khurāsān to Saʿīd.

و روزی بداد. 2 پس سعید داود بن داود را بخواند از بلخ. چون داود بیامد سعید سپاه عرض[134] کرد و از سمرقند برفت و بر چهار سوی قلعه سپاه گرد[135] آورد و حرب آغاز کرد.[136]

19. 1 پس روزی برادر وی نام او قیرم[137] و کنیت خوشام به مبارزت بیرون آمد و اسید بن جبرئیل بن یحیی پیش وی باز شد و او را بکشت. 2 و مردی بود به حصار کش اندر مهتر آن گروه نام وی فیارم[138] و سی هزار مرد و زنان و کودکان کشیان با او اندر حصار بوکت[139] بودند. 3 پس این فیارم توبه کرد و با این کشیان راست شد و مر آن سپیدجامگان را که با او بودند همه را
169 بکشتند و | فیارم[140] با این کشیان همه سوی سعید الحرشی آمدند. 4 سعید شاد شد و آن علف که به حصار بوکت[141] بود همه بر گرفتند و سعید الحرشی هر زنی[142] و کودکی را دیناری بداد و همه را به کش باز فرستاد.[143]

20. 1 و هر چند کوشید هیچ حیلت نتوانست کردن مر گشادن حصار را و زمستان اندر آمد. بفرمود عرب را که خان ها کنید. خانه ها کردند و گرما به و هر مهتری مزگتی کردند خویشتن را. 2 و مردی بود اندر سپاه مسلمانان او را جابر بن احید[144] گفتندی، بر دیوارهای ساده بر شدی و مردی سبک بود. و این جابر با دو تن دیگر بیعت کردند که امشب از کنده از آن جانب شویم[145]

134 ف، فتح: عرضه.

135 ب: کستی (؟).

136 فر، گ، ل1، ل11، إ، م: + خبرخلیفتی مهدی بن منصور. چون مهدی بن منصور بخلیفتی بنشست بهر جانبی سپاه فرستاد بثغرها وگفت هر حالی که افتد مرا آگاه کنید از نیک و بد تا تدارک آن همی کنم.

137 س، ل6، ل7: قرم.

138 یا فیادم. فت، ب: قیرم. س، ل7: فسارم (؟). ل8: قنارم. ل6: قارم. رص: قتوم.

139 از ب (بدون نقطه).

140 ف اینجا: قیارم (قیادم؟).

141 از ب (با نقطه).

142 فتح: مردی.

143 س: ÷ باز.

144 فر: احد. إ، م: احمد. ل11: اسعد. رص بدون نام.

145 گ: + که گرد قلعه بود.

them pay. 2. Then Saʿīd summoned Dāwūd b. Dāwūd from Balkh. When Dāwūd came, Saʿīd inspected the army and left Samarqand. He placed troops around the four sides of the castle and started fighting.[136]

19. 1. One day his brother, *Qyrm*,[137] who was dubbed Khūshām, came out for single combat. Asīd b. Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā came out to meet him and killed him. 2. There was a man in a fortress in Kish, one of the great men of the group there, whose name was *Fyʾrm*,[138] and with him in the fortress were 30,000 Kishshī men and women and children in the fortress of Bawkat.[139] 3. This *Fyʾrm* repented and came to an agreement with these Kishshīs, and they killed all the Whiteclothed ones who were with them. *Fyʾrm*[140] came with all these Kishshīs to Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī. 4. Saʿīd rejoiced. They took all the fodder which was in the fortress of Bawkat,[141] and Saʿīd gave every woman and child a dīnār and sent all of them back to Kish.

20. 1. However much he tried, he could not find a way of conquering that fortress, and winter came. He ordered the Arabs to build houses, so they built houses and baths and every great man made a mosque for himself. 2. There was a man among the Muslim troops called Jābir b. Aḥīd who was good at scaling walls, being a light man. This Jābir pledged with two others that they would cross the trench[145] that night and get inside the enemy's ranks and kill Khārija.

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136 FR, G, L1, L11, E, M: + An account of the caliphate of Mahdī b. Manṣūr. When Mahdī b. Manṣūr became caliph, he sent an army in every direction, to every frontier, and said, "Keep me informed of everything that happens, whether good or bad, so that I can take appropriate action."

137 S, L6, L7: *Qrm*.

138 Or *Fyʾdm*. FT, B: *Qyrm*. S, L7: *Fsʾrm* (?). L8: *Qnʾrm*. L6: *Qʾrm*. RS: *Qtwm*.

139 From B (Nawkat/Nawkar/Bawkar/Bawkat, etc., undotted).

140 F here has *Qyʾrm*.

141 Again from B, this time dotted.

145 G: + which surrounded the castle.

و به میان دشمن اندر شویم و خارجه را بکشیم. 3 پس هر سه تن برفتند و کنده بگذاشتند و به میان دشمن اندر شدند و مر خارجه را مست یافتند. سرش ببریدند و برفتند[146] و آن سر پیش سعید بنهادند. سعید شاد گشت و هر سه را خلعت داد. 4 دیگر روز سپیدجامگان خارجه را بی سر یافتند و کس ندانست که آن که کرد.

21. 1 و آن خبر به مقنع شد، تافته و غمگین شد[147] و سپاه[148] به پسرش[149] سرجمه داد. 2 روزگاری بر آن بر آمد *و مهدی مر معاذ را از امیری خراسان باز کرد و مسیب بن زهیر را داد و به امیری به خراسان فرستاد. مسیب به خراسان آمد و از خراسان به بخارا آمد و منشور و لوای ما وراء النهر به جبرئیل بن یحیی فرستاد. 3 پس روزی چند ببود.**[150] سرجمه رسول فرستاد سوی سعید و گفت اگر من به[151] زنهار تو آیم پذیری که با من بدی نکنی و با[152] یاران من و من تو را بدین قلعه اندر آرم؟ سعید گفت پذیرفتم. سرجمه با سپاه بیرون آمد و سه هزار[153] مرد به زنهارسعید شد و سعید مر او را گرامی کرد و زنهار داد. 4. سرجمه به قلعهٔ بیرونی بود و مقنع به قلعهٔ اندرونی. پس سعید بدان قلعهٔ بیرونی اندر شد.

22. 1 مقنع دانست که کار او تباه شد. با صد[154] زن خویش بنشست[155] وهر زنی را قدحی پر می کرد و زهر اندر آن[156] افکند و گفت بخورید. همه از آن بخوردند و هم بر جای بمردند. 2 و زنی بود نام او بانوقه[157] آن می نخورد. هم بر جای نشسته به گریبان فرو ریخت و خویشتن بیفکند و دانست

146 از ب، فت، فتح. ف، س: ببردند.

147 س، فت، فتح، اس: سخت غمگین شد.

148 گ: هر سپاه که در قلعه بود.

149 فقط در ف.

150 از فت، ب (چهار کلمه آخر فقط در ب).

151 ف: ÷.

152 از س. ف: بر.

153 ب: + وهشتصد.

154 ب: چند.

155 از فت. ف: بر نشست. س: نشست.

156 س: ÷ آن.

157 از ب، فت. ف، س: نابوقه. گ: تابوقه.

3. All three went and crossed the trench and got inside among the enemy, where they found Khārija drunk. They cut off his head and went and presented it to Saʿīd. Saʿīd rejoiced and gave all three of them a robe of honour. 4. The next day the Whiteclothed ones found Khārija headless, without anybody knowing who had done it.

21. 1. The news of this reached Muqannaʿ, he was distressed and grieved, 177
and gave the army to his son Sarjama. 2. Some time passed after that. Mahdī removed Muʿādh from the governorship of Khurāsān and gave it to Musayyab b. Zuhayr, sending him as governor to Khurāsān. Musayyab came to Khurāsān, and from Khurāsān to Bukhārā, where he sent the insignia of government (lit. the diploma and the banner) of Transoxania to Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā. 3. Some days after that, Sarjama sent a messenger to Saʿīd, saying, "If I come into your protection, do you accept not to harm me and my companions, in return for me letting you into the castle?" Saʿīd said, "I accept." Sarjama came out with an army and 3,000 men received into Saʿīd's protection, and Saʿīd honoured him and granted him safety. 4. Sarjama was in the outer castle and Muqannaʿ in the inner one. Saʿīd entered the outer one.

22. 1. Muqannaʿ realized that everything was over. He sat down with his hundred wives and prepared a cup full of wine in which he had put poison for every one of them, telling them to drink. They all drank and all died on the spot. 2. There was a woman by the name of Bānūqa/Nābūqa, she did not drink that wine. Remaining seated where she was, she poured it down her collar and

آن زن که وی دروغ زن است. 3 پس مقنع سوی غلامان رفت وهمه را زهر داد تا بمردند. 4 بانوقه گوید من او را دیدم چون اشتری مست شمشیری کشیده بیامد و مر او را خادمی بود خاص[158] نام او بدر.[159] آن خادم را پاره پاره کرد. 5 و بیامد به نزد تنوری پر آتش و خود را در آن تنور افکند و همی گفت چندین خلق تباه کردم و هلاک کردم[160] و عاقبت خود را بیایست سوختن و در آن تنور همی طپید وهمی غرید تا بسوخت. 6 پس چون بانوقه دید که او مر خویشتن را هلاک کرد بر بام قلعه بر آمد و آواز کرد و گفت خواهید تا در قلعه بگشایم؟ سعید گفت خواهیم. گفت به یک شرط گشایم. گفت بگوی هر چه خواهی. گفت بدان شرط که پیرایه های من و جامه ها به من بگذاری واز خزانه[161] ده هزار درهم مرا دهی. | سعید گفت پذیرفتم[162] و چنان دانستند که 170
مقنع زنده است. پس بانوقه فرود آمد و در قلعه بگشاد و خلق اندر آمدند و سعید هر چه پذیرفته بود بکرد. *و بانوقه قصهٔ مقنع همه بگفت.**[163]

23. *عبد الله بن عمرو بن عامر بن کریز القرشی را سعید خیو به روی انداخت و گفت پدران تو دشمنان آل محمد بودند تو ملعون تر آمدی به یک بارکافر شدی. بفرمود تا گردنش بزدند.**[164]

24. 1 *پس سعید الحرشی هر چه مقنع به چهارده سال گرد کرده بود همه بر داشت وآن مردمان را که به زنهار آمده بودند همه را نامه ها بنوشت.**[165] و سعید از نواکت[166] با ظفر وغنیمت باز گشت. 2 *و مسیب بن زهیر امیر خراسان نامه کرد به امیر المؤمنین مهدی و قصه به سرامین بدو فرستاد،**[167] و به هر شهری مسلمانان شادی کردند از خبر این فتح.

158 از گ.

159 گ: نذران. إ، م، اس: بدران.

160 س: ÷ و هلاک کردم.

161 ب: + مقنع.

162 س: + که این بکنم.

163 از ب.

164 از ب، فت، فتح، رص (بعد از 24:1).

165 از ب. فت، فتح، رص: پس آن غنیمت و خزانه ها بر داشت. ف، س: ÷.

166 از ب (بوکت/نوکت، بدون نقطه). فت: تولت. گ: خواف. ف، س: آنجا. رص: ÷.

167 از ب، فت، فتح. ف، س: پس سعید نامه کرد به (س: با) امیر المومنین مهدی و قصهٔ این حال بدو فرستاد.

threw herself down—that woman knew he was a liar. 3. Then Muqannaʿ went to his *ghulām*s and gave all of them poison so that they died. 4. Bānūqa says, "I saw him coming like a drunken camel with an unsheathed sword, he had a special servant called Badr, and he cut that servant to pieces. 5. Then he went to a hearth full of fire and threw himself in it, saying, 'I have led astray so many people and caused them to perish, and in the end I must burn myself!' He was throbbing and braying in that fire until he was burnt." 6. When Bānūqa saw that he had destroyed himself, she went up on the roof of the castle and shouted, "Do you want me to open the gate of the castle?" Saʿīd said yes. She said, "On one condition." He told her to ask whatever she wanted. (She said), "On condition that you allow me to take all my ornaments and clothes and that you give me ten thousand dirhams from the treasury." Saʿīd said, "I accept." They thought that Muqannaʿ was still alive. Then Bānūqa came down and opened the gate, and people went in. Saʿīd did everything he had agreed to, and Bānūqa told the whole story of Muqannaʿ.

23. Saʿīd spat in the face of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAmr b. ʿĀmir b. Kurayz al-Qurashī, saying, "Your ancestors were enemies of the family of the Prophet, you have become more accursed and turned wholly infidel." Then he ordered them to cut off his head.

24. 1. Then Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī removed all that Muqannaʿ had gathered over fourteen years and wrote letters (of safety) for all those people who had come into his protection. He returned from Nawākit with victory and booty. 2. Musayyab b. Zuhayr, the governor of Khurāsān, wrote a letter to the Commander of the Faithful, Mahdī, and sent the story to him at Sarāmīn, and the Muslims rejoiced at the news of this victory in every city.

25[168]. و این حرب ها همه در ایام مهدی بود پسر ابو جعفر منصور دوانیق زیرا که چون جبرئیل بن یحیی بر[169] خراسان امیر کرد حرب سمرقند در عهد ابو جعفر بود، پس چون ابو جعفر بمرد مهدی پسرش معاذ بن مسلم را به خراسان فرستاد، و حرب مقنع واین سپیدجامگان وترکان همه در عهد مهدی بود که از پس پدر خلیفه بوده است.[170]

168 این بند میان 24:1 و 24:2 آمده است. فتح: ÷.

169 ف: ÷.

170 از س. ف: خلیفت بود.

25. All these wars were in the time of Mahdī, son of Abū Jaʿfar Manṣūr Dawānīq, for since he (Abū Jaʿfar) made Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā amir of Khurāsān, the war at Samarqand was in the reign of Abū Jaʿfar; then when Abū Jaʿfar died, his son Mahdī sent Muʿādh b. Muslim to Khurāsān, and the war with Muqannaʿ and these Whiteclothed ones and the Turks was all in the time of Mahdī, who was caliph after his father.

CHAPTER 7

381 # The Muqanna‘ Narrative in the *Tārīkhnāma*: Part II, Commentary and Analysis

With Masoud Jafari Jazi

Commentary

1.1. Abū Muslim: he was killed in 137, well before al-Muqanna‘’s revolt. **Jibra’īl b. Yaḥyā** al-Bajalī: a prominent general of the early ‘Abbāsid period and the founder of a family of generals and governors (P. Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, Cambridge 1980, 179 f.). He is normally said to have been sent by al-Mahdī rather than al-Manṣūr, in 159 rather than 137; and he was sent as governor of Samarqand, not of the whole of Khurāsān, as assumed here (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa’l-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje and others, Leiden 1879–1901 (hereafter Tab.), iii, 459; Gardīzī, *Tārīkh*, ed. ‘A.-Ḥ. Ḥabībī, Tehran 1363 (hereafter Gardīzī), 279; Ibn al-Athīr, ed. C. Tornberg, Dar Ṣādir reprint, Beirut 1965 (hereafter IA), vi, 39). See further the analysis, section 2. **3. From there**, i.e. from Khurāsān in the sense of Marw. **Deputy**: the claim that Jibra’īl left a deputy rests on the mistaken idea that he was governor of the whole of Khurāsān. In fact, the governor was ‘Abd al-Malik b. Yazīd, usually known as Abū ‘Awn, who is generally said to have been appointed by al-Mahdī in 159 and dismissed in 160 (Tab. iii, 459, 470, 477; cf. Crone, *Slaves*, 174). **4. Whole city came out to meet him**: the Bukhārans may well have come out to receive Jibra’īl when he came there on his way to Samarqand, but not because he was governor of Khurāsān, as assumed here. Ḥusayn b. Mu‘ādh, the governor of Bukhārā at the time, wanted to enlist his help against the local Whiteclothed ones. Jibra’īl agreed to assist and spent the next four months fighting the rebels at Bukhārā (*Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, ed. C. Schefer, Paris 1892, 67 f.; ed. M. Riḍawī, Tehran 1351, 95 f. = R.N. Frye (tr.), *The History of Bukhara*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954, 69
382 (hereafter cited in | the form TB 67 f./95 f. = 69); similarly Gardīzī, 279; IA vi, 39. Here as elsewhere, information shared by Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr comes from Sallāmī). **Deputy**: the name of the deputy is given as ‘Abd al-Malik, i.e. the reference is to the man who was actually governor of Khurāsān. Jibra’īl has now made him his deputy in both Khurāsān and Bukhārā! If he appointed a deputy while he was in Bukhārā, it will have been to Samarqand that he did so. That he should have collected taxes in Bukhārā, as two manuscripts claim (note 2),

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is most implausible. **5. The Khāqān, King of Sogdia**: confusion reigns in the manuscripts as to whether it was al-Muqannaʿ or the Khāqān who claimed to be King of Sogdia (see notes 3, 4, 6, 7; below, section 2; 4.1). Traditionally, this title was held by the king (*ikhshīd*) of Samarqand (H.A.R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, London 1923, 6). It had also been claimed by a rival of his, Dēvāštīč, the last king of Panjikant, to the south-east of Samarqand, in 721–722 (F. Grenet and E. de la Vaissière, "The last days of Panjikent", *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 8, 2002, 156 ff.). But there were no longer kings in Panjikant in al-Muqannaʿ's time, whereas the dynasty in Samarqand still bore the title: the "king of Sogdia, the *ikhshīd*", is mentioned in a list of rulers who accepted the overlordship of al-Mahdī (al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, ed. M.Th. Houtsma, Leiden 1883 (hereafter YT), ii, 479). The fact that this Ikhshīd, long a puppet ruler under Muslim control, is said to have submitted to al-Mahdī suggests that he had rebelled. Perhaps he had supported al-Muqannaʿ, so that we should envisage three men as involved in the conquest of Samarqand: al-Muqannaʿ, the Khāqān *and* the King of Sogdia. But it seems more likely the title had been adopted by the Khāqān or al-Muqannaʿ when they conquered Samarqand, and it is mostly with the Khāqān that the manuscripts associate it.

2.1. Fall of the Umayyads: for the chronology in this narrative, see below. **Note 4: Khārijites in Azerbayjan**: the reference is to Musāfir b. Kathīr al-Qaṣṣāb, an ally of the Khārijite rebel al-Ḍaḥḥāk, who seized power in the time of Marwān II and was defeated by Muḥammad b. Ṣūl under Abū ʾl-ʿAbbās, cf. *Tārikhnāma*, ed. Rawshan, ii, 988 f.; J. Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886*, Lisbon 1980, 423 f. **Muqannaʿ Khāqān**: the two allies have here become a single person, as also in FTH in note 4. Presumably the text originally said something along the lines of "this Muqannaʿ, assisted by the Khāqān (*ba-yārī-yi Khāqān*), had taken control of Samarqand", or that the Khāqān had done so on al-Muqannaʿ's behalf (*az qibal-i Muqannaʿ*). **2. The governor was Muqannaʿ on behalf of the Khāqān**: this is corrupt, both in the sense that al-Muqannaʿ was not in Samarqand and in that the relationship between him and the Khāqān has been reversed. The text may once have said that the governor there was a man acting on behalf of (*az qibal-i*) al-Muqannaʿ whose name was Khāqān, **king of Sogdia** (cf. above, 1.5). **Note** 4: FTH and RS, on the other hand, identify the governor as a **commander** (***sipahdār***) appointed by al-Muqannaʿ or the Khāqān (here identified), and RS turns *sipahdār* into the governor's personal name.

3.1. The adherents of al-Muqannaʿ are represented by **Khāqān-i Muqannaʿ**, i.e. al-Muqannaʿ's Khāqān or al-Muqannaʿ the Khāqān, or simply by the Khāqān,

the King of Sogdia, or by the *sipahdār* (cf. note 7). **2.** In what follows, ***az gurūh-i mukhālif*** (note 9) and ***har kih mukhālif*** seem to be two versions of the same
383 phrase in different combinations, and a fair number of words must have | been lost. The text seems to have described how Yaḥyā defeated al-Muqannaʿ's forces, and the manuscripts of group 2 tell us that al-Muqannaʿ's *sipahdār* was killed (note 9); but cf. below, 4.3, 4.

4.1. King of Sogdia: cf. above, 1.5. **From Samarqand to him**: IA vi, 51, and Gardīzī, 281, also mention that defeated forces of al-Muqannaʿ's joined him in (the mountains of) Sinām/Siyām, but they connect it with the operations of 161 and not with Jibraʾīl's arrival in 159. (See further the analysis, section 3.2.) ***Sapīdjāmagān*** (Arabic Mubayyiḍa), "Whiteclothed ones": the term for a religious group in Khurāsān and Transoxania that joined al-Muqannaʿ's revolt. The sources usually identify them simply as adherents of al-Muqannaʿ's message, though they existed before him and are unlikely to have had identical views (G.H. Sadighi, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au II^e^ et au III^e^ siècle de l'hégire*, Paris 1938; Persian tr. G.-Ḥ. Ṣadīghī, *Junbishhā-yi dīnī-yi īrānī dar qarnhā-yi duwwum wa siwwum-i hijrī*, Tehran 1375, chs. 5–6; P. Crone, "Moqannaʿ", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* [Ed.: included as article 4, "Muqannaʿ", in the present volume], summarizing P. Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism*, New York 2012). Here they are simply a Turkish group, and there no longer seems to be any memory of the religious meaning of the term. **3. He made a man commander** (***amīr***) **over them**: FTH identifies this commander with the *sipahdār* who had represented al-Muqannaʿ and the Khāqān at Samarqand, though he is said to have been killed in the battle with Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā (above, 1.2; 3.2). **4. They fought the Sogdians. Muqannaʿ's commander was defeated**: the commander is the anonymous *amīr* appointed in the previous paragraph. FTH now gives him a name by reading *ḥarb kardand bā sughdigān, sipahdār-i Muqannaʿ*, "they fought with Sughdigān, the commander of al-Muqannaʿ" (note 12). The *sipahdār* who represented al-Muqannaʿ at Samarqand has now acquired two personal names, one his title (note 4), the other a word meaning "Sogdians", and he has also been killed (note 9), reappointed (4.3), and now defeated again! In the *TB* (69.4/98.2 = 71; cf. note 254) this Sughdigān reappears, now as Sughdiyān, as a *naqīb* of al-Muqannaʿ who was *amīr* of the Sogdians and who fought with Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā, apparently at Bukhārā, until a Bukhāran killed him, leaving Jibraʾīl free to go to Samarqand. In Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, *Bayān al-adyān*, ed. H. Raḍī, Tehran 1342, 58, he reappears as *Msʿdkʿn*, i.e. Sughdigān corrupted by the addition of an initial *mīm*, and here he is the *dihqān* of Niyāzā, who participates in the second conquest of Samarqand along with Khallukh Khāqān (cf. below, 10.1). Finally, Gardīzī, 279.ult.,

tells us that when Jibraʾīl left Bukhārā for Samarqand, he went against the Sogdians (*qaṣd-i Sughdiyān kard*) and killed one of their chiefs. Zaryāb suspects that *Sughdiyān* here stands for the same person, not for Sogdians (ʿA. Zaryāb Khūʾī, "Nukātī dar bāra-yi Muqannaʿ", in Y. Mahdawī and Ī. Afshār (eds), *Haftād maqāla: armaghān-i farhangī bih duktur Ghulām-Ḥusayn Ṣadīqī*, Tehran 1369, 83). If this is correct, all three sources were familiar with our Muqannaʿ narrative. But it seems unlikely, given that Gardīzī's account of al-Muqannaʿ's end differs markedly from that in the Muqannaʿ narrative (Gardīzī, 282), and that the name is undoubtedly spurious. The two commanders killed/defeated by Jibraʾīl in connection with his reconquest of Samarqand could be identical (we merely have to read *bishikastand* for *bikushtand* in note 9), and he, or one of them, may have been the *dihqān* of Niyāzā. But the name bestowed on him on the second occasion is simply the plural form of *sughdī*, as Gardīzī quite correctly understood it, not a corruption of Saʿdiyān, as Zaryāb proposed.

5.1 Khārija: this man figures as the arch enemy of the Muslims; he was killed 384
shortly before al-Muqannaʿ's own death, cf. below, 20.3. He is also mentioned in Gardīzī, 281, where he fights Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā at Samarqand under Muʿādh b. Muslim, governor of Khurāsān in 161–163. See further the analysis, section 3. **2. The governor of Khurāsān**: he is left unidentified in our principal manuscripts, but group 2 identifies him as ʿAbd al-Malik (note 16), i.e. Abū ʿAwn ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yazīd, governor of Khurāsān in 159–160. For the idea that ʿAbd al-Malik was Jibraʾīl's deputy, see above, 1.3. **ʿUqba b. Muslim**, alias ʿUqba b. Salm. He is identified as ʿUqba b. Salm al-Hunāʾī in al-Yaʿqūbī, *K. al-Buldān*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden 1892 (hereafter YB), 304, and B confirms this by giving his *nisba* as al-Azdī (the Hunāʾa were a subdivision of Azd). On ʿUqba, see H. Kennedy (tr.), *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, xxix (*al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī*), Albany 1990, note 72. As far as other sources are concerned, he does not belong in the governorship of ʿAbd al-Malik, but rather in that of his successor Muʿādh b. Muslim: when Muʿādh set out to fight al-Muqannaʿ in 161, ʿUqba joined him at Ṭawāwīs, and they arrived at Samarqand as reinforcements to Jibraʾīl, who was fighting the Whiteclothed ones there (Gardīzī, 281 f.; shortened, but otherwise similar, IA vi, 51, year 161; cf. also Tab. iii, 484; YB 304.4). **Bāgh-i Margh/Murgh**: we have not been able to locate it. It is clear, however, that in this narrative, ʿUqba does not relieve Jibraʾīl by marching to Samarqand, but rather by marching against al-Muqannaʿ himself in Kish. Al-Muqannaʿ responds by sending **Fīrūz**, an otherwise unattested commander. **3. He confronted ʿUqba**: in B and F, al-Muqannaʿ's followers are said to do so "again" (see further analysis, section 3). **ʿUqba set out for Kish**: having defeated al-Muqannaʿ's army, ʿUqba proceeds on his way to al-Muqannaʿ's castle. **4. Muqannaʿ wrote to Khārija**: now threatened

himself, al-Muqanna' recalls Khārija from Samarqand so that he can provide assistance, and Khārija devises a ruse to ensure that 'Uqba goes away. **Nāwan** (***n'wn***), **the *dihqān* of Ḥajdān**: the first letter of the *dihqān*'s name is undotted and the reading is uncertain; FTH gives the name as *'wl*. He is envisaged as a secret ally of al-Muqanna', on good terms with the government until he engages in a ruse in another story (below, 9.2 ff.). **5. The letter**: it comes in two different versions, and without B, neither is quite clear. In all manuscripts of group 1 apart from B, 'Uqba is preparing to leave Samarqand when he receives a letter from this *dihqān* falsely claiming that Khārija has defeated Jibra'īl and is now himself on the way to 'Uqba. He responds by leaving, but since he was about to do so anyway, it is hard to see what the ruse has achieved. In the manuscripts of group 2, it is Khārija who has left Samarqand, and the false letter is from Jibra'īl, who gives thanks for the victory. The message is presumably that 'Uqba's services are no longer needed, so he leaves; but since he has just been fighting Khārija, it is hard to see how the letter could carry conviction. B provides the solution: the action is not at Samarqand, but in Kish, and it is Fīrūz, not Khārija, that 'Uqba has defeated. He is indeed preparing to leave, but for al-Muqanna''s stronghold, not to go home. The letter persuades him that Khārija has been victorious at Samarqand and is now coming against him, so he withdraws to Balkh.

6.1. 'Abd al-Malik, governor of Khurāsān: it is now acknowledged that 'Abd
385 al-Malik was the governor, not Jibra'īl's deputy, cf. above, 1.3. ***Shy't* b. Ṣāliḥ**: | perhaps Shu'ayb b. Ṣāliḥ, as AS has it (note 30), but this is an emendation *ad facilior*. For an emendation *ad difficilior*, one might propose *shī'a* and some missing words (in 16.1, FT similarly has *khalīfat* for *khalīfa*). The original text could have said that the governor of Khurāsān wrote to the partisans of the 'Abbāsids (*shī'at banī 'Abbās*) in Transoxania, namely *fulān* b. Ṣāliḥ, Dāwūd b. Dāwūd, etc. The expression *shī'at banī 'Abbās* was certainly current at the time of these events, usually in contrast with the *shī'a* of 'Alī; here the contrast would be with the *shī'a* of al-Muqanna'. Maybe the corruption of the paragraph started because Ibn Ṣāliḥ's name was 'Abbās. **Dāwūd b. Dāwūd**: he reappears later, sometimes as Dāwūd b. Abī Dāwūd (sections 17.1 f., 18.2), but without further identification, and we have not found him in another source. ***Ḥ'jm* al-Dhuhlī (Dahīlat?)**: possibly a corruption of al-Ḥākim al-Dhuhlī, but both names could be Sogdian. **'Amr b. Ma'qil b. 'Aqīl**: he is 'Amr b. 'Aqīl in two manuscripts, and 'Amr b. Ḥamīl/Jamīl in a third (note 30). He appears as 'Amr b. Ḥamīl (emended to Jamīl) in Gardīzī, 286.3, 288.8, where we are told that he settled in Chaghāniyān when Hārūn dismissed Faḍl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī from Khurāsān and that his descendants are still numerous there. Here he is governor of Chaghāniyān, in

the reign of al-Mahdī: maybe this was when he developed a liking for the place. He came from a distinguished family. ʿAqīl b. Maʿqil al-Laythī, his grandfather, was one of the candidates for the governorship of Khurāsān which went to Naṣr b. Sayyār (Tab. ii, 1662) and a supporter of Naṣr in his trouble with al-Ḥārith b. Surayj, al-Kirmānī, and Abū Muslim (Tab. ii, 1865 f., 1920, 1927, 1971, 1985; *Akhbār al-dawla al-ʿabbāsiyya wa-fīhi akhbār al-ʿAbbās*, ed. ʿA.-ʿA. al-Dūrī and ʿA.-J. al-Muṭṭalibī, Beirut 1971, 286). He was eventually killed by Abū Muslim (Tab. ii, 1989). ʿAlī b. ʿAqīl was killed by Qaḥṭaba at Nihāwand (Tab. iii, 7). The family was settled in Ṭukhāristān (Tab. ii, 1927), where ʿAqīl b. Maʿqil served as governor during the hunt for Yaḥyā b. Zayd (Tab. iii, 1770, where he has become an ʿIjlī; Ibn Aʿtham, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, Hyderabad 1388–1395/1968–75, viii, 128 f.). ʿĪsā b. ʿAqīl al-Laythī was governor of Herat for Naṣr (Tab. ii, 1966). A pillar of the Umayyad regime, this family, like that of Naṣr b. Sayyār himself (cf. below, 9.6), had clearly weathered the ʿAbbāsid revolution with some success. **2. Sarjama**: he does not seem to be known to other sources. One manuscript later identifies Sarjama as a son of Khārija, undoubtedly thanks to scribal error (below 21.1). Pavel Lurje and Nicholas Sims-Williams both suggest that the name could be *srcmyk* (Sarchmīk), a personal name attested in a colophon of the Buddhist *Sutra on Intoxicating Drinks* (line 32 in the edition in D.N. MacKenzie, *The Buddhist Sogdian Texts of the British Library*, Leiden 1976, 11), meaning "first, leading one" (cf. *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, part II (*Inscriptions of the Seleucid and Parthian Periods and of Eastern Iran and Central Asia*), vol. III (*Sogdian*), part II: *Sogdian and other Iranian Inscriptions of the Upper Indus*, ed. N. Sims-Williams, London 1992, 70, s.v. "*srʾmyw*"; we owe the references to Professor Lurje). **Khashawī**: this man is also mentioned in the *TB* (69/97 = 70), where he is one of a group of lowly people—*ʿayyār*s, runners, fighters, and pickpockets—and where he is killed by Jibraʾīl at Bukhārā. This would place his death in 159, giving us the year in or before which this campaign was undertaken. Pavel Lurje kindly informs us that the name looks Sogdian | without being clear, 386
but that one might compare *xšʾwkk*, for which a late Sogdian pronunciation might be Xšawī, attested in the Upper Indus inscriptions, cf. Sims-Williams, *Sogdian and other Iranian Inscriptions of the Upper Indus*, 79. **Kayyāk Ghūrī**: a Turkish chief who reappears below, 12.1–3. His name often appears as Kayyāl. Peter Golden, to whom we are much indebted for help on Turkish matters, suggested that Kayyāk might be a rendition of *keyik*, animal or game, usually deer, a plausible name, though this name elsewhere appears in Arabic script without the long *ā* (L. Rásonyi and I. Baski, *Onomasticon Turcicum*, Bloomington, Ind., 2007, ii, 370 f., s.v. "kıyık". We owe our knowledge of this work to Peter Golden.). **3. Sarjama's brother**: his name is not given and he does not appear elsewhere.

7.1. Chaghāniyān: al-Muqanna'ʿs operations here are not attested in other sources. **Note 39**: in the manuscripts of group 2, Sarjama's task is not to besiege the city but rather to recruit troops for the relief of Khārija at Samarqand, implying that al-Muqannaʿ had followers in the countryside of Chaghāniyān.

8.1. Ḥajamī: he is not attested in other sources, but he is identified as the brother of a *dihqān* below, 9.2. Pavel Lurje kindly informs us that the name is unclear, though several Sogdian names start with *cx*. The copyist of RS takes it for granted that both Sarjama and Ḥajamī were Turks (note 40), though the names suggest otherwise (for Sarjama's, see above, 6.2), and the brother of a *dihqān* would hardly have counted as a Turk. **Nakhshab**: it is well known that al-Muqannaʿ had supporters in this region, though all we hear about here is two failures. **3. Tamūdar**, Namūdār/Mardī/Mūdī, Namūdī: probably the village near Nasaf called Mūdā, though it was spelt Mūdawī, in the time of Samʿānī and Yāqūt (V. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, ed. C.E. Bosworth, London 1968, 140; brought to our attention by Pavel Lurje). **Aḥmad the *dihqān***: later identified as Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr. His name is clearly meant to stress his impeccable Muslim status. Like Ḥajamī's brother, he is envisaged as a *dihqān* in the sense of local squire or leading man of the village. **4. The fortress**: how they tried to damage it with water is not clear (by diverting a river?), nor is it clear how it made the fortress stronger.

9.1. The news reached Muqannaʿ, who was grieved: this phrase serves as a refrain, first used in an incomplete form in 5.1. **2. *Dihqān* in Ḥajdān**, brother of Ḥajamī: most manuscripts understand Ḥajdān as his name, but his name was *N'wn/'wl*, as we were told when we first met him (5.4) in the story of Khārija's ruse against ʿUqba b. Muslim. Here too he is associated with a ruse involving a letter and designed to make an opponent leave. Here it is Jibraʾīl that the rebels want to lure out of Samarqand, and it may be by confusion of the two stories that all manuscripts other than B think of ʿUqba as being at Samarqand in the story of Khārija's ruse. **3. The letter**: an apparent supporter of the Muslim government, the *dihqān* claims that the village is suffering from raids by the Whiteclothed ones and asks Jibraʾīl to send horsemen to provide cover for the locals so that they can bring their families to safety in Samarqand. Muslim control of Samarqand is envisaged as assured, and it was clearly in the vicinity of Samarqand that the village was located. **4. Jibraʾīl's brother**: his name is given as Yazīd further down. This brother is also mentioned in Gardīzī, 279.6; IA vi, 39, year 159: he and Jibraʾīl were sent together by al-Mahdī and both fought at
387 Bukhārā for four months (on their way to | Samarqand, cf. above, 1.4). **5. The Turks have cut off the water**: here as above, 4.2, the Whiteclothed ones are

envisaged as Turks. The *dihqān* claims that they have cut off the water to the village at the wellspring and asks Yazīd to go and secure it for them. If Yazīd had come to transport the inhabitants to Samarqand, there would be no point in securing the water supply, but perhaps it was only the women and children who were to stay in Samarqand, and in any case the *dihqān* claims to have an emergency situation. **6. Naṣr**: identified as Naṣr b. Layth below. He was one of Naṣr b. Sayyār's descendants, domiciled at Samarqand, where one of them, Rāfiʾ b. Layth, later raised a major revolt in the reign of Hārūn (Barthold, *Turkestan*, 200). Below, 10.3, we encounter Layth b. Naṣr, who could just be a grandson of Naṣr b. Sayyār (who had died as an old man in 131/748). For the participation of the family in the war against al-Muqannaʿ, see Gardīzī, 279; IA vi, 39, where Layth b. Naṣr is one of them. Compare the family of ʿAqīl b. Maʿqil, above, 6.1. Naṣr (or Layth) realizes that the story of the water is a ruse designed to lure them into an ambush, but they have already been trapped. **10. Went into a corner**: this sentence looks like a doublet of the preceding, where Yazīd enters a ruined palace (*kūshk*) and the Turks surround it: the *kūshk* has turned into a corner (*gūsha*) and the Turks surround it again, in a slightly different formulation. It is not in B.

10.1. The *dihqān* of Nīra/Nabra/Nīrak etc: as in the case of his counterpart at Ḥajdān, the name of his village has become his personal name in some manuscripts (notes 64, 72), as indeed it has further down in the very same manuscripts that first identify it as a place name (below, 10.4). The word order suggests that the word *ba-yārī* (or, as we have written in deference to modern orthography, *bah yārī*), "in assistance", originally formed part of the place name: the *dihqān* was the *dihqān* of Biyārīnīra or in Yārinīra or the like. In Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, 58, we hear of "a man in the village of Niyāzā", who embraced al-Muqannaʿ's cause: it could be this man that we have here. Niyāzā, which would also be written with both an *alif maqṣūra* and a *hāʾ al-taʾnīth*, was a village between Kish and Nasaf (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Leipzig 1883, iv, 854, s.v.; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 140). It is the second *dihqān* we encounter on al-Muqannaʿ's side, though we have also met one who opposed him. In the first two cases, the word seems to have been close to synonymous with village head; here there is nothing to indicate what it stood for. **14,000 men**: the usual inflated figures. **Samarqand**: they now lay siege to it again. **2. Khallukh Khāqān**: the manuscripts often have Khalaj, or now one and now the other. For the question whether this man was a Qarluq or Khalaj chief or something else again, see the analysis, section 5. **3. His brother Qīl**: probably Qïl, (horse)hair, attested as a name (cf. Rásonyi and Baski, *Onomasticum Turcicum*, ii, 452, s.v.; our thanks to Peter Golden for the suggestion). **Layth b. Naṣr**: cf. above, 9.6. **4.**

Nīra/Nabra: see above, 10.1. **5. The Turks take Samarqand**: we have just been told that the Muslims were doing very well, having felled two leading figures on the enemy side; now we are abruptly told that the enemy followed the Muslims into Samarqand and that when evening fell, they wrought havoc in Samarqand. This is clearly corrupt, and the same is true of the versions in all other manuscripts, but they preserve different bits and pieces of the story (note 74). RS proves valuable for once, by telling us that when evening fell, the
388 Turks came back from another direction. | Apparently they had feigned retreat and come back to take the Muslims by surprise. FT and, more briefly, B confirm that the Muslims were defeated by al-Muqanna''s army when evening fell; and the manuscripts of group 2 tell us that the Turks killed (*bikushtand*) or defeated (reading *bishikastand* for *bikushtand*) the Muslims, who were routed (*bah hazimat shudand*). Having come back and routed the Muslims in the evening, the Turks apparently followed the retreating Muslims into Samarqand, making sure that they were not able to reach safety in time. The ruse to which the manuscripts of group 2 refer is presumably the feigned retreat. For the question whether this is a description of the first or (if there was one) the second fall of Samarqand, see the analysis, section 3.

11.1. Abū Jaʿfar: all MSS have Abū Jaʿfar, i.e. al-Manṣūr, except for FT, which leaves the caliph unidentified, and B, which has "Muqanna'". In actual fact the caliph who appointed Muʿādh b. Muslim was al-Mahdī. See further the analysis, section 2. **2. Muʿādh b. Muslim**: he was governor from 160 to 163 (Tab. iii, 477, 500). **Dismiss ʿAbd al-Malik's governors**: it is once more conceded that ʿAbd al-Malik was governor of Khurāsān, not Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā's deputy, cf. above, 1.3; 5.1; 6.1. **3. When Muʿādh came to Marw**: he arrived in 161 (Gardīzī, 281; Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *Taʾrīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ waʾl-anbiyāʾ*, ed. I.M.E. Gottwaldt, Leipzig 1844–1848 (hereafter Ḥamza), 222; ed. Beirut 1961, 163; *TB* 69 f./98 = 71). **Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī**: all MSS other than FT consistently have Jurashī, and FT sometimes has Jurashī, too. For this man, see Kennedy, *History of al-Ṭabarī*, xxxix, 196n. **Amir of Herat**: similarly *TB* 70, 72/98.–5, 101.6 (for *shakhṣī* read Ḥarashī) = 72, 73, where Herat is first written *Hry* (Herī), as sometimes in older manuscripts. Ahwāz is clearly a corruption of Herat, but it is hard to see how group 2 came to make him amīr of Kirmān. **Join you in Bukhārā**: this is in fact what he does below, 12.5. **4. Muʿādh came**: the place to which he came is only preserved in B (note 82), where it seems to be Abūy or Abūkht. It was presumably in the vicinity of Paykand near Bukhārā, where the action in the next section is set. **Jibraʾīl … Samarqand, in siege**: the expression *dar ḥiṣār* is clearly wrong, but we can only guess at what the text may originally have said. Jibraʾīl comes to, or rather "on", the gate (*dar*) of Samarqand in FR, and the gate of Samarqand

is also mentioned in G, M, and E (note 83). In the last three manuscripts, however, he leaves it, which cannot be right. When Muʿādh finally arrived at Samarqand in order to re-conquer it from al-Muqannaʿ's forces, he came as reinforcement for Jibraʾīl, who had been fighting there in his absence (see below, 14.4). Group 1 must be right about the direction of Jibraʾīl's movement: he went to the gate of Samarqand, i.e. he laid siege to it, as proposed in our hypothetical reconstruction of the text in note 83.

12.1. Kayyāk Ghūrī: see above, 6.2. **Khallukh Khāqān**: see above, 10.2, where he is the Turkish chief who participates in the conquest of Samarqand and so presumably the man whose feigned retreat had secured the victory (10.5). The first conquest of Samarqand is also credited to "the Khāqān" (cf. above, sections 1–3). This makes it odd that Kayyāk, who is clearly the lesser partner, should claim the spoils, but he may of course have been the active partner in the actual warfare. **2. Kayyāk said to his companions**: the connection between this and the quarrel just reported is unclear; perhaps Kayyāk Ghūrī | decides to raid the 389
Muslims to make up for his loss of the spoils. **Paykand**: a town to the south of Bukhārā, on the road to Marw. The intention of the Turks, here presented as interested in nothing but plunder, seems to have been to prevent Muʿādh from reaching Bukhārā (and thus also Samarqand). *TB* 70/99 = 72 mentions that al-Muqannaʿ had a commander called Kūlār Tekīn at Bukhārā and that "he" had to fight him. "He" could be Muʿādh or his successor or the amir of Bukhārā, and the relationship of this Kūlār Tekīn to the two Turkish leaders mentioned here is unclear. **5. Saʿīd came**: cf. above, 11.3. **Pay, mangonels, diggers**: it would not be Saʿīd who did these things, since he was not overall commander yet, but it is not clear that the copyists understood this. (Conversely, it should be Saʿīd, not Muʿādh, who pays the troops below, 18.1, where Muʿādh has been dismissed.) This is confirmed by *TB* 70/98 = 71, where it is Muʿādh who assembles 570,000 [*sic*] *men/dihqān*s on his arrival in Bukhārā and orders them to make implements of war, assembling 3,000 men with axes, spades, buckets and the like, and constructing mangonels and ballistae (*manjanīqhāwa-ʿarrādahā*). He was preparing for a siege, presumably of al-Muqannaʿ's fortress, though Samarqand had to be relieved first.

13.1. Saʿīd's sheep: Gardīzī, 282.4, and IA vi, 51 (year 161), merely mention that hostility arose between Muʿādh and Saʿīd, but the story also appears in *TB* 70/98 f. = 72. Here too it follows the account of the preparation of war equipment. Saʿīd has brought the sheep from Herat, and there are also 10,000 here (the figure of 3,000, which is given in E and M, comes from the 3,000 diggers of pits and trenches). (But Gardīzī, 281, also has another story involving

Muʿādh and a refusal to sell: there was a famine in Nishapur and people wanted Muʿādh's son, who was deputy governor there, to sell the harvests and set a good example; he refused because he wanted prices to rise, and duly died.) "**Whatever comes to us …**": the meaning is obscure; Muʿādh may be saying that whatever happens is good. **2. Saʿīd over the vanguard**: Gardīzī, 281.–5, and IA vi, 51, also say that Muʿādh put Saʿīd over his vanguard when he set out against al-Muqannaʿ, giving the year as 161. **3. The Turks came**: in *TB* 70/98 f. = 72 (with the notes at 146), the Turks attack and carry away the sheep at a place between Arbinjan and Zarmān, the former a village seven parasangs from Samarqand, south of the Zarafshān river, on the road to Bukhārā, and the latter a village near Samarqand. This fits the fact that the army is on the way from Bukhārā to Samarqand, where they have to relieve Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā.

14.2. A Turkoman came: the narrative is corrupt beyond reconstitution here. After the Turkish attack, Muʿādh has ensconced himself in a trench with his troops and he and his troops are cut off from water. When the Turkoman comes, the Muslims ask for permission to go to the water, implying that he is an enemy; yet it is to Muʿādh that he brings the letter, and the letter is from Hāshim b. Ḥarb, announcing that he is on his way with assistance to the amir. Maybe the Turkoman was a friend of the Muslims, being a Turkoman (Ghuzz?) rather than a Turk. The word is not used anywhere else in the narrative. But in that case it is unclear why they ask him for permission to go to the water, as opposed to assistance in getting there. **Hāshim b. Ḥarb** (or Kaʿb), ***amīr* of Shāsh**: he is not otherwise known, and all manuscripts make him *amīr* of the pilgrims (*ḥājj*), except for F, which has Jāj or Jalaj. Chāch/Shāsh | was located to the north-east 390 of Samarqand, about as far away as Balkh to the south, but outside the region in which al-Muqannaʿ operated, and this could be why the reinforcements were sent from there. **3.** The continuation is no clearer: they, clearly the Muslims, go (to the water?) and then go down into a(nother?) trench, where they capture and kill some Turkish horsemen by luring them with some horses. Maybe the narrative went along the following lines: Saʿīd abandoned Muʿādh and his troops, who took refuge in a trench where they were cut off from water; they asked for permission to go, but did not receive it, so they trapped the Turkish guards with some horses and got to the water; then a Turkoman arrived with a letter from Hāshim b. Ḥarb, promising reinforcements, and Muʿādh was pleasantly surprised. **4. Reinforcements arrive**: this point is preserved only in group 2, for all its importance. It is their arrival which enables Muʿādh to proceed to Samarqand. **All the troops were united**: that is, Muʿādh's troops, the reinforcements that have been sent to him, and Jibraʾīl's army, as is clear from Gardīzī, 281: Jibraʾīl had been fighting Khārija at Samarqand, and Muʿādh's

troops came as reinforcements. Compare above, 11.4. **5. Set fire to that village**: the narrative must have told us about the village in question, but like so much else in this account, it is lost. **Khārija flees**: when we last heard of him, he was laying siege to Samarqand, which Jibraʾīl had retaken from the Khāqān, the occasion on which he tricked ʿUqba b. Muslim into leaving. This was set in the governorship of ʿAbd al-Malik, i.e. in 159 (above, section 5). In the meantime we have heard of the Turks taking Samarqand (above, section 10) and of Jibraʾīl besieging it in 161 (11.4). Apparently, it was as governor of the city that Khārija had been fighting with Jibraʾīl until he fled (cf. Gardīzī, 281). **6. *Ghulāms***: in the MSS of group 2 they are understood as Kurds by a misreading of *gird*. **7. Divinely assisted**: in all manuscripts other than B, *muʾayyad* has been corrupted, so that we are told that Muʿādh went to Marw and Manṣūr entered Samarqand!

15.1. Muqannaʿ flees to a fortress: so also YB 304.6. But in IA (vi, 51, year 161; cf. Gardīzī, 281) he merely reacts by strengthening his fortress and digging a trench around it, having apparently been there all the time; one has the same impression from *TB*. If he was not there, where was he before? ʿAwfī thinks that he was in Khurāsān (*Jawāmiʿ al-ḥikāyāt*, ed. J. Shiʿār, Tehran 1995, 272), and this may also be what al-Yaʿqūbī thought, but they are confusing his reaction to defeat with his flight from Khurāsān back in the days when Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba had tried to arrest him (on this, see the analysis, section 2). **Nawā[kit]**: B preserves the stump of the name of al-Muqannaʿ's fortress; cf. below, 24.1, where it appears as Naw(ā)kit (undotted). It is normally called Sanām in the secondary literature, with reference to Yāqūt, *Buldān*, iii, 155, s.v. (quoted by Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, ed. I. ʿAbbās, Beirut 1970–1978, iii, 264). But Yāqūt's vocalization refers to the first of four places he lists by that name, and Sinām or Siyām was actually the name of the mountains in the Kish region in which the fortress was located (al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna ʾl-firaq*, ed. M. Badr, Cairo 1328/1910, 244.4; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 134). In the *TB* (66/93 = 67), where the name is given in the form of Sām, we are explicitly told that it was the name of the mountain (cf. also Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, 59). Gardīzī twice gives Sām or Siyām as the name of the fortress (278.ult., 281.ult. and the notes), but in a third passage he too has it as the place: al-Muqannaʿ's | followers took "the fortress 391
and [*sic*] Nawākith in Sām and Sangard" (279.4). The "and" should be deleted. IA vi, 39, says that al-Muqannaʿ ensconced himself "in a fortress in Sinām and Sanjarda", and that the Whiteclothed ones took the fortress of Nawākith as well as some castle(s) in Kish. (Sangarda also appears in Gardīzī, 278.ult., corrupt, but recognized by Zaryāb, "Nukātī dar bāra-yi Muqannaʿ", 82.) That al-Muqannaʿ had two castles, one located in Sām/Siyām, is explicitly stated in *TB*. B's *naw'* must be the fortress in Siyām, Nawākith, here preserved with both the

dot over the *nūn* and the *alif* missing in 24.1. See below, 19.2, on the basis of which Bolshakov held Nawākit to be another fortress of al-Muqannaʿ. **2. Ten years**: see below, 24.1. **Stored up food**: so also in Tab. iii, 484.ult. **Inner and outer fortress**: thus also *TB* 66, 72/93, 101 = 67, 74, where the outer fortress has gardens, fields and trees inside the wall, but evidently not enough for al-Muqannaʿ to withstand a siege.

16.1. Jibraʾīl made deputy in Samarqand: this resumes the narrative from the end of section 14: having entered Samarqand, Muʿādh leaves Jibraʾīl as his deputy there and goes off to lay siege to al-Muqannaʿ. **2. Call al-Muqannaʿ to Islam**: compare *TB* 67/94 = 68 f. where it is the judge of Bukhārā who calls the Sapīdjāmagān at Narshakh in Bukhārā to Islam, also unsuccessfully. **3. Curtain**: al-Muqannaʿ did not allegedly allow anyone to set eyes on him, apart from his wives and a single slave, presumably the one intended here (*TB* 71.9/100.3 = 73). **4. He shouted**: the reference must be to al-Muqannaʿ, who is speaking with the visitor from behind the curtain. **Sayyid**: al-Muqannaʿ is casting himself as God, cf. the alleged letters by him in *TB* 65/91 = 66, in which he styles himself *sayyid al-sādāt*. His claim to divinity is being ridiculed: if he was omniscient, why did he not know what the emissary had come for? But there may none the less be a genuine recollection of al-Muqannaʿ's titulature here, for *sayyid* and *sayyid al-sādāt* are unusual terms for God. If he styled himself *sayyid* (*al-sādāt*), what did he mean by it? Sogdian *baga* (god) could be used to address anyone from a gentleman to a deity, having developed into little more than a polite form for "you". The Muslims strongly disapproved of this usage, and when the Afshīn was put on trial for apostasy, they forced him to reveal that his subjects addressed him as "god of gods". It did not mean much in Sogdian, but it sounded blasphemous in Arabic (*ilāh al-āliha*) and so served the prosecution's case (J.B. Henning, "A Sogdian God", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 28, 1965 (reprinted in his *Selected Papers* II, Leiden 1977), 242–254; Tab. iii, 1310 f.). Al-Muqannaʿ may have used the same title, translated as *sayyid al-sādāt*. But "lord" was also the title given by the Manichaeans to Zoroaster, Jesus, and the Buddha; they addressed Mani and Maitreya as "lord" as well; and eastern Iranians seem to have understood the name of the historical Buddha, Śakyamuni, as meaning "the wise Lord" or, in al-Shahrastānī's translation of *Shākman*, "the noble lord" (*al-sayyid al-sharīf*) (for all this, see M. Tardieu, "La diffusion du bouddhisme dans l'empire kouchan, l'Iran et la Chine, d'après un kephalaion manichéen inédit", *Studia Iranica* 17, 1988, 166 f. and the references given there; H.-J. Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia*, New York 1993, 134; cf. also D. Gimaret, "Bouddha et les bouddhistes dans la tradition musulmane", *Journal Asiatique* 257, 1969, 277 f.). All these figures were

regarded as divine beings, and there is a fair amount of evidence | to suggest 392
that al-Muqannaʿ cast himself as the Maitreya Buddha (cf. Crone, "Moqannaʿ"; Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran*). So while the Afshīn was undoubtedly innocent of the charge of self-deification, al-Muqannaʿ probably did mean to refer to his own divinity when he called himself *sayyid al-sādāt*. He just did not mean that he was God in the sense in which his Muslim opponents understood it. **5. Power over my slaves**: al-Muqannaʿ is casting himself as God again. He also claims power, authority and glory in the letters in *TB* 65/91 = 66. **6. Took me by the hand**: this does not fit al-Muqannaʿ and must refer to the slave. **Khārija**: having fled from Samarqand (above, 14.5), he is back with al-Muqannaʿ. Compare Sallāmī's reference to fugitives joining al-Muqannaʿ in Gardīzī, 281.ult.; IA vi, 51.

17.1. Dāwūd b. Dāwūd: previously met as governor of Chaghāniyān (above, 6.1). B now calls him Dāwūd b. Abī Dāwūd. **2. Arabs cannot do anything in the cold**: this was an old cliché; compare Tab. i, 2391, where the Arabs are expected to abandon their siege of Ḥimṣ when winter comes. The use of the cliché here shows that Muʿādh had brought his troops from Baghdad. They were Arab in terms of political loyalty, language and lifestyle, not necessarily in an ethnic sense. Muʿādh himself was a *mawlā* of Banū Dhuhl (YT ii, 563).

18.1. Saʿīd wrote every day: he also writes to al-Mahdī in IA vi, 51. **Muʿādh dismissed**: it is not known exactly when this happened. He was governor of Khurāsān until 163 (Tab. iii, 500), when he asked to be excused, thanks to his disagreement with Saʿīd according to Gardīzī, 282, for reasons unspecified in *TB* 70/99 = 72. This could also be when Saʿīd replaced him as commander of the war against al-Muqannaʿ, though it could have happened earlier, too. **Gave them pay**: the subject is, or should be, Saʿīd rather than Muʿādh, cf. above, 12.5. **2. Dāwūd b. Dāwūd**: see above, 17.1.

19.1. *Qyrm* dubbed Khūshām: the words translated "dubbed Khūshām" (*wknyt Khwshʾm*) should perhaps be read as part of the name, or maybe he was dubbed Khūshnām. Though al-Muqannaʿ is not mentioned by name, he seems to be his brother, and this is made explicit in RS. But the narrative is such that the reference could well have been to someone else's brother. **Asīd b. Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā**: this son of Jibraʾīl does not seem to be attested elsewhere. **2. *Fyʾdm* (*Fyʾrm/Qyrm*) with 30,000 in the fortress in Kish**: this sounds suspiciously like the *Qyrm* we have just met (cf. also the variations in the notes). He is duly identified as al-Muqannaʿ's brother by O.G. Bolshakov, "Khronologiya vosstaniya Mukann", in B.G. Gafurov and B.A. Litvinsky (eds), *Historiya i kultura narodov*

srednej Azii, Moscow 1976, 96 (our thanks to Alexander Neymark for drawing this article to our attention and to Oleg Grabar for summarizing its contents for us); C.E. Bosworth and O.G. Bolshakov in M.S. Asimov and C.E. Bosworth (eds), *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, IV (*The Age of Achievement: A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century*), Paris 1998, 37. **Bawkat**: it is undotted on the first appearance, fully dotted on the second (cf. notes 139, 141), but the initial B notwithstanding, it looks like Nawākit, the name of al-Muqannaʿ's castle (cf. above, 15.1). It is also understood as Nawākit by Bolshakov, "Khronologiya", 94, 95, 96, who takes this passage to mean that it was a castle defended by al-Muqannaʿ's brother, not al-Muqannaʿ's own; similarly Bosworth and Bol-
393 shakov, *History of* | *Civilizations*, who locate it at the site of Kamay-tepe, 40 km south-west of Shahr-i Sabz. That it was indeed al-Muqannaʿ's own seems to be taken as fact in 15.1 and 24.1; it is also in al-Muqannaʿ's own castle that the man who is actually identified as al-Muqannaʿ's brother is killed in the preceding paragraph; and Sallāmī strongly suggests that the man who defects in this paragraph actually did so from al-Muqannaʿ's castle. Sallāmī says that when the Sapīdjāmagān were reduced to famine by Saʿīd's siege, they sued for peace without al-Muqannaʿ's knowledge and "30,000 men came out from the trench and left" (Gardīzī, 282; IA vi, 51; also reflected in Baghdādī, *Farq*, 244.12). Here *Fy'rm/Fy'dm/Qyrm* leaves the castle with 30,000 men. Sallāmī further says that after the defection of the 30,000, the Muslims occupied the trench, and that al-Muqannaʿ still had about 2,000 *ahl al-baṣā'ir* left. Here we are told that after the defection of the 30,000, a certain Jābir b. Aḥīd and his friends succeeded in crossing the trench, and that al-Muqannaʿ still had 3,000 men left: it was when Sarjama defected with 3,000 men that he committed suicide (sections 20–21). In short, Sallāmī and our narrative seem to be talking about the same man: section 19 gives us two different stories about the same *Qyrm*, who was possibly al-Muqannaʿ's brother. In one story he is felled by a son of Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā, the "blessed man" (11.2); in the other he redeems himself by repenting, but either way he was originally envisaged as being at al-Muqannaʿ's fortress. The first story was presumably told for the greater glory of Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā, the second by *Qyrm*'s descendants. Once the stories came together, they had to be about two different men in different fortresses in order to make sense. **4. They took all the fodder**: if the above reconstruction is right, it must have been the defectors themselves who took it.

20.1. Houses, baths, mosques: Saʿīd also builds houses and baths in *TB* 72/101 =74, where he is said to have stayed at the fortress "summer and winter". He also stayed for several years (*sinīn*) according to Baghdādī, *Farq*, 244.9. **2. Jābir b. Aḥīd**: his father's name looks non-Arab, or corrupt, but only late manuscripts

give it as Aḥmad. Neither he nor the story is known from elsewhere. In Gardīzī, 282, it is starvation that forces the Sapīdjāmagān to surrender. The **trench** they have to cross is al-Muqannaʿ's, as note 145 makes explicit. He is said to have had it dug around his fortress after the defeat at Samarqand (Gardīzī, 281.ult.; IA vi, 51, year 161). Baghdādī, *Farq*, 244, claims that Saʿīd filled it with 10,000 buffalo skins he had ordered from Multān and stuffed with sand. The story of Jābir is probably a romantic version of the Muslim occupation of the trench after the defection of the 30,000 (cf. above, 19.2). **Khārija**: see above, 5.1 ff.; 14.5; 16.6.

21.1. His son Sarjama: Sarjama's appearance here as a son of Khārija or al-Muqannaʿ undoubtedly rests on a copyist's mistake: *pisar* is simply a doubling of *basar*(*jama*). For his earlier appearance, see above, 6.2 and section 7. **2. Musayyab b. Zuhayr**: he was appointed in 163 and remained governor until 166 (Tab. iii, 500, 517; Ḥamza, G, 222; B (where he has become Zuhayr b. al-Musayyab); *TB*, S 70; R = 72). Gardīzī, 282 f., oddly has him come in 166 and receive his letter of dismissal in the first month of 167, after governing Khurāsān for eight months. For his background and descendants, see Crone, *Slaves*, 186 f. **3. Sarjama defects**: compare *TB* 72/101 = 74, where an unnamed *sipahsālār* opens the gate of the outer castle. **With 3,000 men**: | in Gardīzī, 282.3, and IA 394
vi, 51, al-Muqannaʿ had about 2,000 men left at this stage (cf. above, 19.2), so Sarjama's defection will have left him without any troops. **4. Outer and inner castle**: cf. above, 15.2.

22.1. A hundred wives: thus also Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, 60.7, and *TB* 71/99.ult. = 73, where they are the daughters of the *dihqān*s of Sughd, Kish and Nakhshab. That he poisoned them is a well-known story, cf. E.L. Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan under Abbasid Rule 747–820*, Minneapolis and Chicago 1979, 143. **2. Bānūqa/Nābūqa**: we have opted for the form Bānūqa on the assumption that her name is formed from Middle Persian *bānūg*, "lady" (also suggested to us by Pavel Lurje). In *TB* 72 f./102 = 74 f., she is nameless, but identified as a grandmother (or more distant ancestor) of a *dihqān* from Kish, who tells the story on her authority (similarly Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, 60). **4. Special servant**: similarly *TB* 71.9, 72 f./100.3, 102 = 73, 74; Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, 60. **5. Hearth**: *tanūr*, i.e. a fireplace lined with bricks, stones or tiles, here presumably sunk in the ground at the centre of the room. The word is often translated "oven", which has the unfortunate effect of conjuring up something with a closing door. Al-Muqannaʿ is said to have thrown himself into a hearth and to have disappeared without a trace in many other sources, including the *TB*. **At the end I must burn myself**: in *TB* (73/102 = 74 f.) he burns himself with the comment that he wants to go to heaven to bring angels to punish, or alternatively assist, his followers. Bīrūnī

(*Āthār*, 211) more plausibly says that he wanted to demonstrate the truth of his claim (to divinity). Here he could be taken to say either that he deserves to burn for leading so many people astray or that it is too bad that he must burn himself now that he has led so many people astray. **6. Open the gate**: similarly the version in *TB*, with reference to her conditions. They are briefly mentioned in Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, 60.

23. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAmr b. ʿĀmir b. Kurayz al-Qurashī: the three manuscripts which have this story insert it in the account of Saʿīd's final arrangements before his departure in the next section; we have moved it to what would seem a more natural place. The reference must be to al-Muqannaʿ's Arab father-in-law, called ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAmr in *TB* (65/92 = 67). Apparently, he had stayed with al-Muqannaʿ until the end, and the story suggests that al-Muqannaʿ had not in fact killed everyone in his castle before killing himself, as the sources insist. The father-in-law has here been cast as the descendant of a famous Umayyad, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿĀmir b. Kurayz al-Qurashī, who participated in the conquest and reconquest of Khurāsān before and after the First Civil War (cf. *EI*^{2}, s.v. "ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir"). Saʿīd's statement, "Your ancestors were enemies of the family of the Prophet", refers to the fact that this Umayyad fought against ʿAlī in the Battle of the Camel and later negotiated with al-Ḥasan on behalf of Muʿāwiya. The story can hardly have been known to Narshakhī or Qubāwī, the authors of *TB*, who would surely not have left the father-in-law unidentified if they had believed him to descend from a famous Qurashī.

24.1. All that Muqannaʿ had gathered over fourteen years: he spent fourteen years in the castle according to *TB* 72/101 = 74; cf. Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 211; Baghdādī, *Farq*, 243.10, where his revolt lasts for fourteen years. Above, 15.2, we were told that he had been accumulating food and fodder for ten years in his castle when Muʿādh reconquered Samarqand, suggesting that the siege is envisaged
395 as having lasted for four years. For the view that it lasted | for several years, see also above, 20.1. **Letters**: the plural form *nʾmh*ʾ is ambivalent. Saʿīd could also be taken to write the names of those he had granted safety, but it would be a less natural construction. **Nawākit**: see above, 15.1. **2. Musayyab b. Zuhayr**: see above, 21.2. That the victory took place in his governorship is generally agreed. The sources usually place it in 163, the year in which he was appointed, but this is incompatible with the view that al-Muqannaʿ's revolt lasted for several years (above, 24.1), and there is good evidence in favour of 166, the date first advocated by Sadighi (cf. Crone, "Moqannaʿ"). **Al-Mahdī in Sarāmīn**: al-Mahdī is widely said to have received the news of al-Muqannaʿ's defeat at Aleppo or Mosul, which he visited during a journey to the Byzantine border (cf. Tab. iii,

494, 498 f.), and Sarāmīn should perhaps be read Sarmīn, a district of Aleppo (Yāqūt, *Buldān*, iii, 83, s.v.). But this would be an emendation *ad facilior*. If we take the *alif* to be a residue rather than an accidental insertion, Sarāmm could be a corruption of Qarmāsīn or Sīrawān (though the latter is plausible only if the second name was sometimes written Sārawīn). If so, al-Mahdī is envisaged as having received the news on his way to Māsabadhān, where he unexpectedly died (cf. Tab. iii, 522 ff.): Gardīzī, 155, mistakenly claims that he died soon after receiving the news (though he has it happen at Mosul). The narrative here could reflect the same mistaken belief.

25. These wars were all in the days of Mahdī: this attempt to bring order into the chronology does not appear in B, FTH or F, and in group 2 it takes a different form (notes 133, 136). Both attempts, however, are clumsily inserted in the middle of something else. We have moved this one from its position between 24.1 and 2 to a section of its own. For the chronology in this work, see the analysis, section 2.

Analysis

The Muqannaʿ narrative is of great interest for the light it throws on a number of problems to do with al-Muqannaʿ's revolt, notably when it began, when and how many times he occupied Samarqand, his sphere and mode of operation, and the nature of his followers. These are the topics we shall cover here, to conclude with a discussion of how the narrative may have been formed.[1]

1 *The Samarqandī Perspective*

The first half of the narrative is really about Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā. It is as "an account of the governorship of Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā in Khurāsān" that it is introduced in all of the manuscripts we have seen except for B, which calls it "an account of the conquest of Samarqand": either way, what we are being promised is first and foremost an account of Jibraʾīl's exploits at Samarqand. He is the hero of the story here, a great warrior (1.1), a blessed man (12.2), and allegedly the governor of the whole of Khurāsān, not just of Samarqand; the man who actually governed Khurāsān at the time, ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yazīd (better known by his *kunya* Abū ʿAwn), is reduced to a mere deputy (1.2; 5.2). There is little

1 Since it is impossible to follow discussions of chronology with double dates, in what follows we only give *hijrī* dates where chronology is the issue.

396 interest | in al-Muqannaʿ himself. The narrative starts in the middle of his career, with the appointment of Jibraʾīl, and tells us nothing of what he stood for beyond the fact that his followers were called Whiteclothed ones, explained as the name of a Turkish people (4.2; cf. 9.3).

It is only in the first half of the narrative that Jibraʾīl is the key figure, however. With the appointment of Muʿādh b. Muslim (12.2), the focus shifts from Samarqand to Bukhārā and Kish; and though we do hear about both Jibraʾīl and Samarqand thereafter too (10; 11.4; 14.6; 16.1; cf. 19.1), he ceases to be at the centre. What we get now is a story of how other men succeeded in defeating al-Muqannaʿ, with the reconquest of Samarqand as a step on the way. This half contains a passage in which we incidentally learn that al-Muqannaʿ claimed divinity (section 16; cf. also 22.5), but there is no interest in religious matters.[2] The focus throughout the narrative is on war, with much interest in the number of troops (usually exaggerated), single combats, and the sort of tricks that the enemy will engage in.

The first part sounds like an account of the war against al-Muqannaʿ composed in honour of Jibraʾīl after the final victory of the Muslims at Samarqand, of which he was the governor. It has been combined with, or inserted into, a general account of al-Muqannaʿ's revolt, reflected in the opening words of the narrative (1.1) and in the second half. It is with the eulogy of Jibraʾīl as a blessed man that the two halves are tied together; we are reminded of Jibraʾīl's role at Samarqand at later points as well (11.4; 16.1); and towards the end we even get a story about his son which seems to have been inserted for the sole purpose of stressing the family's contribution to the final victory against al-Muqannaʿ (19.2–4). So it was probably at Samarqand that the two accounts were combined.

The value of the narrative lies mainly in the first part, in which we see the events from Samarqand, as opposed to from Bukhārā or Baghdad. Everything we read in this part is new, and though it is not always right, there is much to be learnt from it.

2 *The Beginning of the Revolt and the Conquest of Samarqand*

One point on which the Samarqandī narrative throws light is the year in which al-Muqannaʿ's revolt began. The standard chronicles do not answer this question because they rarely report revolts by the years in which they

2 Noted already by J.S. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, Edinburgh, 1999, 33 (treating the narrative as Balʿamī's). Even the occasional references to religion are missing in the Vienna manuscript printed in Rawshan, on which her account is based.

began, but rather by the years in which they became newsworthy, such as when a major army was sent against them or they were suppressed. Ibn al-Athīr, for example, reports the beginning of the revolt in 159, the year in which Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā left for Transoxania to take action against the rebels, though he makes it perfectly clear that there had already been several local attempts to suppress them.[3] Al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Ṭabarī have al-Muqannaʿ rebel as late as 161, the year in which Muʿādh b. Muslim was appointed to Khurāsān and of the war against | him,[4] and most sources associate him exclusively with the reign of 397
al-Mahdī. The Muqannaʿ narrative in the *Tārīkhnāma*, on the other hand, does not contain a single date, and as Zaryāb points out, its implicit chronology is faulty (especially in the one version in which Zaryāb knew it).[5] Its key error lies in its insistence that most of al-Muqannaʿ's revolt was enacted in the reign of al-Manṣūr rather than that of al-Mahdī. For all that, it has something important to tell us.

The narrative begins by having al-Manṣūr despatch Jibraʾīl to Khurāsān after the death of Abū Muslim, i.e. in 137, which is some twenty-two years before Jibraʾīl actually arrived. There are several ways in which this could be explained. One would be to argue that "when Abū Jaʿfar killed Abū Muslim" simply means "at some indefinite point after Abū Muslim's death", so that no chronological proximity between the two events is implied.[6] But it would be a strange way of introducing events that took place twenty-two years after Abū Muslim's death, and it would be strange even if we assumed the reference to be to the earlier dispatch of Jibraʾīl to Khurāsān (to fight Ustādhsīs) in 150/767 f.;[7] the narrative proceeds by having Jibraʾīl move to Samarqand to fight al-Muqannaʿ. Another possibility would be that the mention of Abū Muslim in the opening line is secondary: the line did not originally say "when Abū Jaʿfar killed Abū Muslim, he chose … Jibraʾīl", but rather "When Abū Jaʿfar heard about the incursions of the Turks in that region, he sent Jibraʾīl to fight them". This line is actually found in al-Ṭabarī, where it refers to al-Manṣūr's dispatch of Jibraʾīl to fight the Turks in the Caucasus region in 147/764 f.: the author of our text might mistakenly have read the passage as referring to Jibraʾīl's battles with al-Muqannaʿ's Turks.[8] But if so, how did Abū Muslim get to be in the sentence whereas the Turks fell out?

3 IA vi, 38 f.

4 YB 303; Tab. iii, 484.

5 Zaryāb, "Nukātī", 91. He knew it from Sadighi's Vienna manuscript printed in Rawshan.

6 This possibility was put to us by the anonymous reader.

7 Tab. iii, 354. This possibility was also mentioned by the anonymous reader.

8 Tab. iii, 328. This too was put to us by the anonymous reader.

Yet another possibility is that the narrative originally started by telling us about events after Abū Muslim's death that led to the dispatch of Jibraʾīl. Al-Muqannaʿ did not rebel when Abū Muslim was killed, but others did, and it would have come naturally to mention them by way of introduction to al-Muqannaʿ's revolt, and to say something about that too before introducing Jibraʾīl. The narrative could even have presented al-Muqannaʿ himself as rebelling after Abū Muslim's death, misled by the fact that he cast himself as Abū Muslim's avenger: one passage in the manuscripts of group 1 says that al-Muqannaʿ seized power when the Umayyads fell (2.1 and note 4). On this hypothesis the author started quite correctly with the words "when Abū Jaʿfar killed Abū Muslim" and narrated the appropriate events, but a later copyist inadvertently jumped to a subsequent passage, possibly missing a whole page, thus omitting everything between Abū Muslim's death and Jibraʾīl's dispatch. This seems the most plausible explanation given that everything thereafter is correctly placed in the late 150s and early 160s. If so, all extant versions of the Muqannaʿ narrative may go back to single, defective manuscript, for all the ones that we have seen start with the same line, except when they have lost even more of the beginning.

398 Manuscript corruption hardly suffices to explain the strong association of Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā with al-Manṣūr, however. One way or the other, all extant versions of the narrative place the first half of the campaigns against al-Muqannaʿ in his reign. Thus the narrative continues by having al-Manṣūr appoint Muʿādh b. Muslim in most of group 2 (cf. 11.1), i.e. in 160, though al-Manṣūr had died in 158; and two manuscripts of group 1 even have Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī write to al-Manṣūr rather than al-Mahdī, implying that it was al-Manṣūr who appointed Saʿīd to the high command in (probably) 163 (see note 130). Most of group 1 and all of group 2 do give the caliph's name as al-Mahdī in connection with Saʿīd's correspondence (cf. 18.1), but group 2 now explains that al-Manṣūr had died in that year and been succeeded by his son al-Mahdī, who appointed Saʿīd to the governorship of Khurāsān (note 133, cf. also RS in note 129). They even insert a caption announcing the caliphate of al-Mahdī in the middle of the narrative of the campaign (note 136). But al-Manṣūr had died several years before Saʿīd's appointment (quite apart from the fact that Saʿīd was not appointed governor of Khurāsān, only chief commander of the war against al-Muqannaʿ). In group 1, on the other hand, we are told at the end of the narrative that the wars involving Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā and Samarqand took place in the reign of al-Manṣūr, who appointed Jibraʾīl governor of Khurāsān, whereas the rest of the war took place under al-Mahdī, who appointed Muʿādh b. Muslim (section 25), which is not entirely right. But it may not be entirely wrong either. It is also in the time of al-Manṣūr that al-Muqannaʿ's revolt

is placed in a statement by al-Faḍl b. Sahl to al-Ma'mūn.[9] It does in fact seem to have been under al-Manṣūr that al-Muqannaʿ's revolt began.

According to the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, al-Muqannaʿ served as soldier and secretary in Marw under Abū Dāwūd (d. 140) and ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Azdī (d. 141), and his subversive preaching began after the latter's fall, eighteen years before al-Manṣūr's death. At first, nothing came of it. He was sent to jail in Baghdad, but when he came back, he started preaching again, and when Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba became governor of Khurāsān, he tried to arrest him.[10] Ḥumayd was appointed in 151, seven years before al-Manṣūr's death, according to Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī and Gardīzī, presumably drawing on Sallāmī, though al-Ṭabarī places his appointment in 152.[11] It is probably on the basis of Sallāmī's date that Abū 'l-Maʿālī places the beginning of al-Muqannaʿ's mission in 151, though it could have been much later that Ḥumayd tried to capture him.[12] In any case, the armed revolt began before his appearance in Sogdia. According to the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, he left Marw and went into hiding "until it became known that a large number of people had joined his faith in Transoxania and | brought it into the open (*dīn-i* 399
way āshkārā kardand)"; his doctrine "went public in some regions and localities (*dar chand makān wa maḥall ẓāhir kard*)", as Abū 'l-Maʿālī says.[13] Al-Muqannaʿ then crossed the Oxus with thirty-six followers and ensconced himself in a mountain fortress in the region of Kish and Nasaf (Nakhshab), where he had another fortress: it was the Whiteclothed ones who had seized these fortresses according to Sallāmī, as preserved in Ibn al-Athīr and Gardīzī (see the commentary to 15.1).

We can say with some confidence that the violence had broken out by 157, a year before al-Manṣūr's death, for Gardīzī says that in 157 the Sapīdjāmagān of Bukhārā appeared, at a time when Ḥusayn b. Muʿādh was governor of Bukhārā.[14] The *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* says the same, but with 159 for 157 (twice), so

9 Tab. iii, 773; al-Jahshiyārī, *K. al-Wuzarā' wa'l-kuttāb*, ed. M. al-Saqqā and others, Cairo 1938, 277; IA vi, 224.

10 *TB* 64 f./90 ff. = 66 f.

11 Ḥamza, 221/163; Gardīzī, 277 f.; Tab. iii, 369.

12 Abū 'l-Maʿālī, 60. Compare G.-Ḥ. Ṣadīqī, "Baʿḍī az kuhantarīn āthār-i nathr-i fārsī", *Dānish-kada-yi adabiyāt*, 13/4, 1345, 61, where the outbreak is placed in either 152 or 158, clearly on the assumption that it was the violence in Sogdia which caused Ḥumayd to try to arrest him (compare G.H. Sadighi, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au II^e^ et au III^e^ siècle de l'hégire*, Paris 1938, 164n = *Junbishhā-yi dīnī-yi īrānī dar qarnhā-yi duwwum wa siwum-i hijrī*, Tehran 1375, 169 f.).

13 *TB* 65 f./92 f. = 67; Abū 'l-Maʿālī, 58.

14 Gardīzī, 279.

that the appearance of the Whiteclothed ones falls in the reign of al-Manṣūr in the former, in that of al-Mahdī in the latter; the date of the latter source seems to have gained universal acceptance.[15] But *sabʿa* and *tisʿa* are frequently confused in the manuscripts, and here 157 must be right. Firstly because the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* proceeds to tell us of Ḥusayn b. Muʿādh's efforts to combat them before he was able to secure the assistance of Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā, who arrived in 159, and he tells us so much that it is hard to believe it could all have taken place in one year. Second, Sallāmī, as reflected in Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr, informs us of other events that preceded Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā's dispatch: not only had the Whiteclothed ones seized the two fortresses, they had also battled with several commanders, including one Abū ʾl-Nuʿmān, one al-Junayd, and three members of Naṣr b. Sayyār's family in Samarqand, that is Layth b. Naṣr, Muḥammad b. Naṣr, and Ḥassan b. Tamīm b. Naṣr b. Sayyār, the last of whom they had killed.[16] Again, it is hard to believe that all this could be crammed into the year in which Jibraʾīl arrived. In short, Gardīzī has the better date: the revolt had broken out by 157, in the reign of al-Manṣūr.

What we learn from the *Tārīkhnāma* is that it was probably also in al-Manṣūr's reign that al-Muqannaʿ took Samarqand. Al-Manṣūr died in the last month of 158, an obvious source of confusion as to exactly what happened in his reign and what in al-Mahdī's. The governor of Khurāsān, Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba, died shortly before or shortly after al-Manṣūr, still serving in the post he had received in 151; unfortunately the exact date of his death is important. According to Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, he died under al-Manṣūr, and his son was still serving as interim governor of Khurāsān when al-Mahdī succeeded.[17] This is probably correct. Al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, places Ḥumayd's death in 159,
400 in the reign of al-Mahdī,[18] as do Ḥamza al-Isfahānī and Gardīzī.[19] But unlike | al-Ṭabarī, the latter two know that he was succeeded by his son for six months, and by accommodating this son, they run into trouble with Ḥumayd's real successor, Abū ʿAwn ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yazīd, who was appointed to Khurāsān in

15 *TB* 67/93 f. = 68. Even Bolshakov, "Khronologiya", 95, opts for 159 as the date by which the revolt had broken out, without taking Gardīzī into consideration.

16 IA vi, 39; Gardīzī, 279.

17 Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Taʾrīkh*, ed. S. Zakkār, Damascus 1967–1968, 676 f., 696.

18 Tab. iii, 459.

19 Ḥamza, 222/163; Gardīzī 278.1, 280.1. The first passage is interestingly corrupt here: Ḥumayd "died in the reign of al-Manṣūr" (*bi-rūzigār-i Manṣūr bimurd*), it says; but it continues by saying (as does Ḥamza) that al-Mahdī confirmed him in his position, so the editor quite reasonably inserts a *ū*, to make the phrase read "in his time al-Manṣūr died".

159 and, according to al-Ṭabarī, dismissed in 160.[20] They have to place his arrival in Ṣafar in 160, which makes his tenure implausibly short. What is more, Ḥamza knows that there was something problematic here, for he adds, in connection with Ḥumayd's death, that "He knows best" and prolongs Abū ʿAwn ʿAbd al-Malik's governorship by making his successor, Muʿādh, a mere commander of the war against al-Muqannaʿ rather than full governor. All this suggests that Khalīfa is right. If we assume that Abū ʿAwn ʿAbd al-Malik arrived in Ṣafar in 159, the year in which he is usually said to have been appointed, he would indeed have arrived in the reign of al-Mahdī, but he would owe his appointment to al-Manṣūr. The same would apply to Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā, who was appointed at the same time.[21] Khalīfa does in fact mention Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā as governor of "some place" (*fī nāḥiya*) in Khurāsān under al-Manṣūr.[22] In short, the *Tārīkhnāma* seems to be right in its insistence that Jibraʾīl was appointed by this caliph.

The significance of this lies in its implications for al-Muqannaʿ's activities. It was not normally the caliph who appointed the governor of Samarqand. Sub-governors were appointed by the governor of Khurāsān himself, and the universal chroniclers do not usually report their names. Why, then, was it the caliph who appointed Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā, as all the sources agree, even though they differ over the caliph in question? The only explanation is that something serious had happened at Samarqand. The universal chroniclers know nothing about Samarqand, either at that time or later in al-Muqannaʿ's revolt, but there can be no doubt that al-Muqannaʿ held this city at one point, for he issued coins (unfortunately undated) and the mints were at Samarqand and Nasaf; since, according to the *Tārīkhnāma*, he failed to take the city of Nasaf, he must have struck them at Samarqand.[23] Only the *Tārīkhnāma* is clear that he conquered Samarqand, and what is more, it tells us that he had done so before Jibraʾīl's arrival (1.5; 2.1). He and his ally, the Turkish Khāqān, must in that case have taken it before al-Manṣūr's death, presumably in 158. The news of its fall will have arrived in the same year, and the new appointments will have been made shortly before al-Manṣūr's death in Dhū ʾl-ḥijja, to arrive in 159, in the reign of al-Mahdī.

This hypothesis makes excellent historical sense: al-Muqannaʿ will have used the death of Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba in 158 as his cue to strike, secure in

20 Tab. iii, 459, 470, 477.

21 Tab. iii, 459.

22 Khalīfa, *Taʾrīkh*, 676. Both he and others also have Abū ʿAwn as governor of Khurāsān under al-Manṣūr before Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba, but this does not appear to be relevant: it was as governor for the second time that he succeeded Ḥumayd, as Ḥamza explicitly says.

23 B. Kochnev, "Les monnaies de Muqannaʿ", *Studia Iranica* 30, 2001, 143–150.

the knowledge that no concerted action would be taken against him until
401 a new governor | had been chosen, had made preparations, and marched from wherever he was at the time (probably Baghdad) to familiarize himself with his new province before deciding on a course of action. That the caliph himself died shortly thereafter, further delaying matters, was his stroke of luck.

When al-Manṣūr is envisaged as the caliph throughout the Muqannaʿ narrative, or at least until the appointment of Saʿīd al-Ḥarashī, the assumption may be that since he was the caliph who had appointed the hero of the story, everything else connected with the hero must have happened in his reign as well. But it could also reflect the fact that al-Muqannaʿ's two conquests of Samarqand (if two there were) have come to be told as almost identical events (see below). The corrective view that only the wars involving Jibraʾīl b.Yaḥyā and Samarqand had taken place in the reign of al-Manṣūr, everything from the appointment of Muʿādh b. Muslim (in 160) onwards falling in that of al-Mahdī, is not entirely correct, but it makes perfect sense from a Sogdian point of view. The caliphs were known on the basis of their governors, and it was al-Manṣūr who had appointed Jibraʾīl, allegedly to the whole of Khurāsān. The change of caliph was recorded with the appointment of the next governor, Muʿādh b. Muslim. Where exactly in the sequence of local events al-Manṣūr's death had occurred was not remembered.

3 *One or Two Conquests and Reconquests?*

The fall and recovery of Samarqand are the key events in the Muqannaʿ narrative, and it is also our only source for them; yet the passages relating to these events are in a more corrupted state than the rest of the text. Why this should be we do not know; given that this is the case in all the manuscripts we have seen, however, the damage may go back to our hypothetical single, defective manuscript. One result is that it is hard to tell whether Samarqand fell and was reconquered twice or just once.

The narrative tells us that al-Muqannaʿ's forces took the city twice and lost it twice, first to Jibraʾīl and next to Muʾādh b. Muslim (along with Jibraʾīl and others), and the sequence of events is perfectly coherent. We are told that when Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā arrived, Samarqand was in the hands of al-Muqannaʿ and the Turkish Khāqān (repeatedly identified); we are given no details of how they had conquered it, however, beyond the fact that it had involved a ruse (2.1). The details of Jibraʾīl's reconquest are also lost: all we learn is that when he arrived, the city was divided into two groups, one supporting the Khāqān (or the *sipahdār* who had been appointed there, identified by Abū ʾl-Maʿālī as the *dihqān* of Niyāzā, cf. the commentary 4.4). Jibraʾīl fought

the opposing group and the Sogdians and the Turks who opposed him fled, whereupon he entered the city (section 3).

Samarqand is duly envisaged as being in Jibraʾīl's hands in the episodes which follow. We are told that al-Muqannaʿ attempted to oust him, first by sending a large army under an unnamed commander who was defeated and then by sending Khārija to lay siege to the city (sections 4–5). Later, al-Muqannaʿ tried to lure Jibraʾīl out of the city, though Jibraʾīl responded by sending his brother, who was killed (section 9). After the failure of this attempt, al-Muqannaʿ attacked the city again, this time enlisting the co-operation of the *dihqān* of Niyāzā and a Turkish chief, Khallukh Khāqān (later we learn that another | 402
Turkish chief, Kayyāk Ghūrī, had also participated), and that this attempt succeeded. Apparently, the Turks feigned retreat and then took the Muslims by surprise in the evening, whereupon they followed their routed opponents into Samarqand and wrought havoc there. They used a ruse, as some manuscripts tell us (section 10).

As regards the events leading to the second reconquest, we are told that the caliph appointed a new governor to Khurāsān, Muʿādh, who sent Jibraʾīl to lay siege to Samarqand (section 11). Muʿādh himself went off to fight Kayyāk Ghūrī, who was now raiding at Paykand near Bukhārā, and to gather men and machines for a siege (section 12). He then set off for Samarqand. On his way, he was attacked by the Turks, reduced to dire straits, but helped by reinforcements, and when he joined Jibraʾīl at Samarqand, the combined forces retook the city. Khārija, apparently al-Muqannaʿ's governor there, fled with a number of his followers (sections 13–14). Muʿādh left Jibraʾīl as deputy governor of Samarqand (16:1) and proceeded to Kish to start the siege of al-Muqannaʿ's fortress.

This is perfectly coherent, and there is nothing in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* to contradict it: it merely informs us that Jibraʾīl and Muʿadh had many battles at Samarqand.[24] But there are some obvious doublets: Samarqand twice falls to Turks who are led by a Khāqān and who use a ruse; the *dihqān* of Niyāzā seems to be present on both occasions; in both cases the fall of Samarqand is followed by the appointment of a new governor of Khurāsān, Jibraʾīl (in reality ʿAbd al-Malik) and Muʿādh respectively; and in both cases the caliph is Abū Jaʿfar. More seriously, all the information relating to the aftermath of the first reconquest in the *Tārīkhnāma* actually to refers to the second. In the *Tārīkhnāma*, Jibraʾīl battles with Khārija after his first reconquest of the city, implicitly in 159 (section 5); in Sallāmī, as preserved in Gardīzī, he does so in 161, in connection with the reconquest of the city in the governorship of

24 *TB* 69/98 = 71.

Muʿādh.[25] In the *Tārīkhnāma* Jibraʾīl asks for reinforcements from the governor of Khurāsān after the first reconquest of the city, and the governor, identified as ʿAbd al-Malik (gov. 159–160), sends ʿUqba b. Muslim (5.2); but in all other sources, ʿUqba b. Muslim is part of Muʿādh's team, and Sallāmī as reflected in Gardīzī explicitly says that Muʿādh's forces, including ʿUqba, came to reinforce Jibraʾīl when the latter was laying siege to Samarqand, not being besieged in it.[26] Finally, the *Tārīkhnāma* says that when Jibraʾīl took Samarqand in the first reconquest, many of al-Muqannaʿ's followers joined him, to form part of the large army that al-Muqannaʿ sent to reconquer the city (4.1–2). Sallāmī in Ibn al-Athīr and Gardīzī also says that al-Muqannaʿ's defeated forces joined him, but he says that they did so in 161, when they had been defeated by the combined forces of Jibraʾīl and Muʿādh.[27]

All this could be taken to suggest that Samarqand only fell once. On the other hand, there is nothing implausible about the idea that Jibraʾīl should have retaken Samarqand, only to lose it again to al-Muqannaʿ's forces so that it had to be conquered again, and there is reason to think that this is what actually happened.

403 First, when the *Tārīkhnāma* describes ʿUqba's operations in the year implicitly given as 159, all manuscripts but one have him march to Samarqand to battle with Khārija, as he does in the second reconquest, but B has him march in the direction of Kish to battle with an otherwise unknown commander of al-Muqannaʿ by the name of Fīrūz, and this is the only version in which the narrative makes sense (cf. section 5 and commentary). Here, then, operations in 159 are quite different from those of 161 even though the same man is involved in both. In line with this, the version given in the other manuscript says that al-Muqannaʿ's followers confronted ʿUqba "again" (cf. 5.3 and commentary). Without B, this "again" would not have counted for anything. It is not even correctly placed, since it was in 161 that they did so again. But apparently they did confront each other twice. Second, the manuscript offers us a precise synchronism: Khārija was at the gate of Samarqand, i.e. besieging it after Jibraʾīl's first reconquest, while Sarjama was active in Chaghāniyān (7.2 and note 39). This information follows an account, also notable for its precision, of how diverse governors of Transoxania were defeated by al-Muqannaʿ's forces at Tirmidh in the governorship of ʿAbd al-Malik, that is in 159–160 (section 6), so Khārija's siege also belongs in that period. In short, Jibraʾīl does seem to have recon-

25 Gardīzī, 281.

26 Gardīzī, 281; Tab. iii, 484; YB 304.

27 Gardīzī, 281; IA vi, 51.

quered Samarqand on his arrival, only to lose it and conquer it again with the assistance of Muʿādh as told both here and in other sources. If just one manuscript had preserved more details about the two conquests and reconquests, there would undoubtedly have been much more evidence with which to dissociate the suspiciously similar accounts, but not a single one does. If the events sound alike, however, it is apparently not because they are doublets, but rather because they were assimilated in the course of retelling.[28]

If this is correct, we can postulate the following sequence of events: Samarqand fell to al-Muqannaʿ, represented by the Khāqān, in 158, causing al-Manṣūr to send Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā as governor of this city charged with the task of reconquering it. Jibraʾīl arrived in Marw in 159 and proceeded to Bukhārā, where, as the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* informs us, he spent four months fighting the White-clothed ones together with the local governor before moving on to Samarqand. He next had "many battles at Samarqand", as the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* puts it, meaning that he reconquered the city, but lost it again in 160. This, as our narrative informs us and other sources give us to understand, was why ʿAbd al-Malik Abū ʿAwn was dismissed in favour of Muʿādh b. Muslim.[29] Jibraʾīl continued his "many battles" at Samarqand, but in 161 Muʿādh was ready to come to his help and together they reconquered the city. Khārija fled with his troops and joined al-Muqannaʿ. Jibraʾīl remained at Samarqand as governor on behalf of Muʿādh, and Muʿādh went off to lay siege to al-Muqannaʿ's fortress. It was probably then that al-Muqannaʿ tried to lure Jibraʾīl out of Samarqand, leading to the events in which Jibraʾīl's brother was killed (section 9): the attempt will have been part of an effort to relieve the pressure on al-Muqannaʿ himself. In sum, Samarqand seems to have been under | al-Muqannaʿ's control, possibly with a short interruption, from 158 to 159 and again from 160 to 161. 404

4 *Al-Muqannaʿ's Sphere and Mode of Operation*

As mentioned previously, the *Tārīkhnāma* says that the governor of Khurāsān, ʿAbd al-Malik, wrote to three sub-governors telling them to get an army together against al-Muqannaʿ at Tirmidh (section 6). The three men were Ibn Ṣāliḥ, deputy governor of Balkh for Dāwūd b. Dāwūd; Ḥākim al-Dhuhlī(?), governor of Tirmidh; and ʿAmr b. Maʿqil b. ʿAqīl (al-Laythī), governor of Chaghāniyān, the only one of them who is known from other sources. They met at Tirmidh, 14,000 men strong, and there they confronted a 15,000-strong army of al-Muqannaʿ's

28 Bolshakov, "Khronologiya", 90 f., 96, also accepts that Samarqand fell and was reconquered twice, but without discussing the problems.

29 Cf. Tab. iii, 477; IA vi, 46: Abū ʿAwn was dismissed because the caliph was angry with him.

commanded by Sarjama, Khashawī and the Turk Kayyāk (or Kayyāl) Ghūrī. Sarjama's brother gave the governor of Chaghāniyān to understand that he would defect, but this was a ruse, and the government troops were defeated. Thereafter al-Muqannaʿ sent Sarjama to Chaghāniyān, where he laid siege to the city for a month, according to the manuscripts of group 1 (section 7). According to group 2, he went there to raise troops (note 39).

All this is new. It implies that al-Muqannaʿ had been operating at Tirmidh and explicitly says that he tried to conquer Chaghāniyān, or at least (if we go by group 2) that he had followers there. This makes good sense. Control of Tirmidh, on the border between Sogdia and Ṭukhāristān, would have given him control of the route running from Balkh in the south to Samarqand in the north via the pass known as the Iron Gate and Kish. Since he defeated the coalition, one would have expected him to follow up the victory by taking Tirmidh, but we are not told whether he did so. Instead, we are told, he made a bid for Chaghāniyān. Control of this city would enable him to block access to the Iron Gate from the east. Again, the narrative is curiously uninterested in the political outcome of the military encounters it describes. We are not told whether the siege of Chaghāniyān was successful, perhaps implying that it was not, but it is hard to say, for the narrative is reluctant to mention Muslim defeats. With the exception of the battle at Tirmidh and the second loss of Samarqand, it is the Muslims who win every battle, though they are sometimes reduced to dire straits first; and on the two occasions on which they lose, the enemy was said to have used a ruse. If al-Muqannaʿ did take control of Tirmidh and Chaghāniyān, all he would need to render his control of Sogdia complete would be to conquer Nasaf and Bukhārā. The *Tārīkhnāma* informs us that al-Muqannaʿ did in fact try to take Nasaf: after sending Sarjama to Chaghāniyān, he sent a certain Ḥajamī to lay siege to the city of Nasaf, but only with 3,000 men, and we are explicitly told that this attempt was a failure (section 8). Al-Muqannaʿ was also operating in Bukhārā at the time, for when Jibraʾīl arrived on his way to Samarqand in 159, the governor of Bukhārā persuaded him to stay and fight the local rebels first, as we have seen.

In short, one has a strong sense that al-Muqannaʿ knew what he was doing. He had been planning the revolt for a long time. Back in his days in Marw he had dispatched missionaries along the lines he had learnt as a participant in
405 the Hāshimite (aka ʿAbbāsid) revolution,[30] and he had built up support for | himself in the countryside of Kish, Nasaf, Samarqand, Bukhārā, and apparently also Chaghāniyān, by the time he engaged in the conquest of Samarqand, an

30 Cf. *TB* 65/91 = 66.

action bound to put him in direct confrontation with the might of the caliphate. He timed it well; and he followed it up with a systematic attempt to conquer the strategic cities that would make his control of Sogdia complete. He was clearly a man with some military and political experience, but he had trouble with the cities. We do not know whether he succeeded in taking the cities of Tirmidh or Chaghāniyān, or whether he ever conquered that of Kish, but he failed to take both Nasaf and Bukhārā. His only success in terms of cities appears to have been Samarqand. When he lost it, his movement was doomed.

The account of the battle at Tirmidh is also interesting for showing that al-Muqannaʿ's forces could defeat government troops in pitched battle, at least when they included Turkish forces. The sheer number of commanders they had defeated, according to Sallāmī in Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr, before Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā was sent also shows that they were not simply raiders, though we are left in no doubt that they were that too (cf. 5.6; 7.1; 9.3; 10.5; 12.2). There are a fair number of pitched battles in the Muqannaʿ narrative. For the rest, the military action is mostly about sieges, both of cities and of villages, and the sieges seem mainly to have been about reducing the inhabitants to starvation. Ḥajamī's troops could do nothing at Nasaf because the rich had released their supplies from their stores, so that food was plentiful (8.2 f.). Al-Muqannaʿ prepared for the siege of his fortress by storing up food supplies (15.2); and though we are explicitly told that the caliphal troops had brought siege equipment with them (12.5 and the commentary to it), it was by reducing his followers to starvation that they induced them to surrender according to Gardīzī.[31]

When the rebels were besieging a fortress or city, they would raid the neighbouring villages to feed and provision themselves (7.1). Thanks to their habit of living off the land, the rebels came across to the author(s) of the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* as little but thieves who robbed caravans and stole the harvests of the Bukhārans.[32]

5 *The Followers*

In the *Tārīkhnāma* as in other sources, al-Muqannaʿ's followers are Sogdians and Turks whose sectarian name is *Sapīdjāmagān*, Whiteclothed ones, but as noted already, there is no interest in their beliefs. We learn that they included *dihqān*s (9.1; 10.1), but we also hear of a *dihqān* who opposed them (8.3). The *dihqān*s come across as fairly humble people. One is wealthy, but he lives in the village, not in a manor house outside it; the same is true of another. We

31 Gardīzī, 282.

32 *TB* 65/92 = 67.

see one of them lead the village in defence against external threats, while the other acts as representative of his village vis-à-vis the governor, seeking help for it (sections 8, 9). The third is the *dihqān* of Niyāzā whom we met in action at Samarqand, so that we do not get an impression of his status at home (10.1). The first two come across as village headmen rather than as landed magnates. In the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* we learn that the village headman (*khāwand-*
406 *i dīha*) | of Narshakh was a widow, presumably of the former village headman,[33] and that she too was on al-Muqannaʿ's side. If Narshakh's's headman was on al-Muqannaʿ's side, we can presume that the whole village was, willingly or unwillingly.

The *Tārīkhnāma* also offers us a fair number of Sogdian names, many of them new. The personal names are *Nʾwn* (the first letter undotted), also rendered *ʾwl* (5.4) and *Srḥmʾ* (6.2; 21.1), *Ḥjmy* (8.1), *Khshwy* (6.2), Khārija (an Arabic name, but probably by adaptation of a Sogdian one, 5.1), and *Fyʾdm/Qyrm/Qtwm* or the like with the kunya *Khwshʾm* (19.1, 2, and the notes thereto). We also meet a Fīrūz and an (undoubtedly fictitious) Bānūqa (5.2; 22.2). The place names include the villages of *Ḥjdʾn*, near Samarqand (5.4), *Tmwdʾr/Nmwdʾr/Mrdy/Mwdy*, a village near Nakhshab (8.3, notes 42, 44), the village of *Yʾry-nyrh/nbrh* and the like, probably Niyāzā (10.1), and the fortresses *NwʾBwkt*, or the like, undoubtedly Nawākit (15.2). For further details, see the commentary to these passages.

The *Tārīkhnāma* has some new information on the Turks in the movement, too. They are called *turkān* throughout, except in one obscure passage in which we hear of a *turkmānī* (or, in some manuscripts, *turkmānān*), who seems to be on the Muslim side (14.2). Some leaders are named. The man who conquered Samarqand for al-Muqannaʿ is identified as the Khāqān and styled "King of Sogdia", though this title is also given to al-Muqannaʿ himself (see the commentary 1.5); some manuscripts call him King of the Turks and Farghāna as well (note 3), all in the same context. Later the narrative mentions a *Khlkh* or *Khlj* Khāqān, perhaps the same man, his brother Qīl (or Pīl), and his ally, with whom he had a disagreement, Kayyāk (or Kayyāl) Ghūrī, whom we also encounter in the battle at Tirmidh (6.2; 10.2; 12.1–3).

Who was this Khāqān? Sallāmī, as cited by Gardīzī and Ibn al-Athīr, merely calls al-Muqannaʿ's Turkish allies *kuffār al-atrāk*.[34] In connection with the Seljuqs, however, Ibn al-Athīr cites an earlier historian of Khurāsān according to whom they were Ghuzz who had crossed into Transoxania in the reign of al-Mahdī and converted to Islam: when things went badly for Muqannaʿ they

33 *TB* 69/97 = 71.

34 IA vi, 39; Gardīzī, 279.1.

betrayed him, as was their wont; they had betrayed the Khāqānid kings as well.[35] Ghūrī, the *nisba* of the Khāqān's ally, could in fact be read as Ghūzī (it appears as such in one manuscript, L5), and the forms Ghūz and Ghūriyya also appear in al-Masʿūdī for the Ghuzz.[36] Kayyāl Ghūrī may have been the leader of a band of outriding Ghuzz. The historian quoted by Ibn al-Athīr made him stand for all of al-Muqannaʿ's Turkish followers because his intention was to illustrate the unreliability of the Ghuzz who had flooded the Muslim world in his own time.

Khlkh Khāqān, however, has to be either a Qarluq or a Khalaj. If we read the name as Khalaj Khāqān, al-Muqannaʿ's Turkish followers were Khalaj from what is now Afghanistan. Al-Baghdādī explicitly says that al-Muqannaʿ's | Turks 407
were *al-atrāk al-khalajiyya* (though there is no reason to trust that reading).[37] Khalaj Khāqān's companion Kayyāk Ghūrī could be read as a Khalaj from Ghūr rather than a Ghuzz, and casting al-Muqannaʿ's Turkish followers as Khalaj would have the advantage of fitting the information that he came from Balkh: he could have established connections with them there. But it is a strained interpretation. The Khalaj had no historical connection with Samarqand, nor is the imperial title of Khāqān attested for them, and Ṭukhāristān-Zābulistān is not where one would expect a rebel in Kish to draw support. Besides, the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* says that al-Muqannaʿ's Turks came from Turkestan, while Abū ʾl-Maʿālī says that al-Muqannaʿ invited the king of Turkestan to raid Transoxania.[38] This rules out south-eastern Iran.

We thus have to read the name of the chief in the *Tārīkhnāma* as Khallukh Khāqān: Khallukh is the Persian transcription of Qarluq.[39] The Qarluqs were the Turks who had supplanted the Türgesh as the leading power in western Central Asia in the mid-eighth century. They had spread from the east in the wake of the collapse of the eastern Türk empire and participated in the battle of Talas on the Chinese side, but defected to the Muslims; thereafter they had conquered the Türgesh homeland in Suyab, where the Türgesh submitted to them in around 766.[40] Al-Baghdādī's *khalajiyya* could just as easily be read *al-*

35 IA xi, 178 (year 548), adding that they had done the same to *al-mulūk al-khāqāniyya*, presumably meaning the Türgesh.

36 al-Masʿūdī, *al-Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. C. Pellat, Beirut 1966–1979, i, § 226, note 12; ii, § 1119; iii, § 2063, note 1.

37 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 243. Īlāq is written Ablaq, Sughd as *Sʿd*, and similar scribal errors or editorial misreadings abound in the book.

38 *TB* 67/93 = 68; Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, 59.

39 *EI*[2], s.v. "Ḳarluḳ". Bolshakov, "Khronologiya", 93, col. 2, assumes them to be Qarluqs.

40 P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, Wiesbaden 1992, 138–141; P. Golden in D. Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge 1990, 349 f.

khallukhiyya.[41] The main problem in casting al-Muqanna''s Turks as Qarluqs is that the latter are not known to have adopted the imperial title of Khāqān, previously borne by the Türgesh, at this early stage.[42] Their chief was traditionally known as *yabghu*, and this is how he appears in the list of rulers who submitted to al-Mahdī.[43]

This suggests that the chief who conquered Samarqand was the leader of the Qarluq splinter groups in Transoxania,[44] perhaps a dissident member of the Qarluq ruling house, and that he was laying claim to the Türgesh heritage in an attempt to assert his position against the main body of Qarluqs and the Muslims alike. This would have secured him the support of former members of the Türgesh confederation, by whatever name they were now known, and it is hard not to suspect that they played a major role in the movement. It was a chief of the Türgesh confederation who had been overlord of Sogdia, including Samarqand, on the eve of the Arab invasions, and Khāqān was the title by which he had been known. Evicted from their dominant position in
408 Sogdia by the | Muslims and supplanted by the Qarluqs further east, the Türgesh had every reason to join a movement which promised to restore them to their former status. Just as ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī, the ʿAbbāsid conqueror and governor of Syria, enrolled former members of the Umayyad army in Syria when he made a bid for the caliphate against al-Manṣūr, so a dissident member of the Qarluq chiefly house would have been likely to enrol former Türgesh troops in a bid for supremacy against the *yabghu* further east.

We know that there had been support among the Turks of Transoxania for Isḥāq al-Turk, the ex-soldier who had preached a message related to that of al-Muqannaʿ after Abū Muslim's death, at a stage at which the Turks in question must have been Türgesh;[45] and we later hear of Whiteclothed ones in Īlāq, Shāsh and Farghāna.[46] Al-Baghdādī credits their presence in Īlāq to al-

41 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 243.

42 *EI*^{2}, s.v. "Ḳarluḳ", col. 658. Here we are told that they never adopted it, but Masʿūdī expressly says that *fihim kāna 'l-mulk wa-minhum khāqān al-khawānīn* (*Murūj*, i, § 313) (cf. P. Golden, "Imperial ideology and the sources of political unity amongst the pre-Činggisid nomads of western Eurasia", *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2, 1982, 56), where their adoption of the title in its full imperial sense is dated to after 840.

43 YT ii, 479.

44 For such splinter groups, see *EI*^{2}, s.v. "Ḳarluḳ".

45 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. R. Tajaddud, Tehran 1971, 408.7.

46 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 243; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, ed. H. Darke under the title *Siyar al-mulūk*, second edition, Tehran 1985; tr. H. Darke, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*,

Muqannaʿ[47] (suggesting that it was indeed as *khallukhiyya* rather than *khalajiyya* that he meant to identify al-Muqannaʿ's allies). In line with this, some manuscripts of the *Tārīkhnāma* credit al-Muqannaʿ, here undoubtedly a mistake for the Khāqān, with the title King of the Turks and Farghāna (note 3). In actual fact, the Whiteclothed ones of Īlāq, Shāsh and Farghāna may predate al-Muqannaʿ, for Buddhist adherents of the Maitreya Buddha were known to the Chinese as Whiteclothed ones;[48] but they would indeed have been receptive to al-Muqannaʿ's message, for there are strong suggestions that he cast himself as Maitreya.[49] If Muqannaʿ's Turks were a coalition of Transoxanian Qarluqs and former Türgesh whose chief claimed the position once held by the Türgesh, it will not have been for the plunder and adventure alone, but also for his messianic message that they, or at least some of them, joined him.

6 *The Formation of the Muqannaʿ Narrative*

As mentioned above, the first half of the Muqannaʿ narrative seems to be primarily about Jibraʾīl and Samarqand, while the second comes across as a general account of the war against al-Muqannaʿ to which occasional references to Jibraʾīl b. Yaḥyā have been added, and the whole account should perhaps be seen as a celebration of the victory composed at Samarqand in honour of Jibraʾīl. The first part may have used the expression *shīʿat banīʾl-ʿAbbās* (see the commentary, 6.1), which is suggestive of high antiquity, and it also has passages which are strikingly precise and detailed (notably 7, 9, and B's version of 5). The second part comes across as more legendary in character, with its semi-fictional story of Saʿīd's sheep and its largely or wholly fictional stories of the attempt to call al-Muqannaʿ to the faith, Jābir b. Aḥīd's crossing of the | trench, 409
and Bānūqa's survival to witness al-Muqannaʿ's end (sections 13, 16, 20). But there are some precise (if sometimes garbled) details in this part too, notably the name and lay-out of al-Muqannaʿ's castle, the names of the generals and governors involved in the siege, and the defections that led to the fall of the outer castle; and the sequence of events in the entire narrative looks sound. It is undoubtedly textual corruption, not poor historical recollection on the part of the author, which accounts for the dire condition of so much of it.

London 1960, ch. 46, 22; al-Shahrastānī, *K. al-Milal wa'l-niḥal*, ed. W. Cureton, London 1842–1846, i, 194.

47 *Farq*, 243.

48 H. Seiwert and Ma Xisha, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, Leiden 2003, 151–153.

49 Cf. P. Crone, "Moqannaʿ", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, summarizing P. Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism*, New York 2012.

There is further information relevant to the history of the Muqannaʿ narrative in other sources. In his account of al-Muqannaʿ, al-Bīrūnī (d. after 442/1050) mentions that he has translated *akhbārahu* from Persian into Arabic, referring the reader to a now lost work of his for further details.[50] This sounds like a reference to a work entitled *Akhbār-i Muqannaʿ*, and Sadighi took this work to be identical with our Muqannaʿ narrative; he further identified the work translated by al-Bīrūnī with the *Akhbār-i Muqannaʿ* by one Ibrāhīm which is mentioned as one of the sources on al-Muqannaʿ in the *Tārikh-i Bukhārā*.[51] It would be very convenient if both the work translated by al-Bīrūnī and that composed by Ibrāhīm were identical with our narrative, and the titles obviously fit; but unfortunately it is not possible. The work translated by al-Bīrūnī may well be our Muqannaʿ narrative, but Ibrāhīm cannot be its author.

Ibrāhīm is probably the Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad who is said in the *Fihrist* to have been learned about the Muslimiyya. Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990) knew of him from an anonymous history of Transoxania, from which he quotes him as a source on Isḥāq al-Turk.[52] He is not otherwise known, but he clearly wrote on religion, a subject in which the Muqannaʿ narrative does not display any interest. That makes it unlikely that he should be its author. In fact he cannot be, for the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* draws on both Ibrāhīm and the Muqannaʿ narrative. In his opening lines on al-Muqannaʿ, the Persian translator of the work, Qubāwī (wrote 522/1128 f.), says that Narshakhī, who wrote the work in Arabic in 332/943 f., left his chapter on al-Muqannaʿ incomplete and proceeds to tell the story of al-Muqannaʿ's early career on the authority of Ibrāhīm, author of the *Akhbār-i Muqannaʿ*, and Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī.[53] The mention of al-Ṭabarī here has caused some headache because Qubāwī's account has practically nothing in common with that in al-Ṭabarī's history;[54] but what Qubāwī meant, of course, will have been the Persian translation. His "Ṭabarī" is our "Balʿamī", or in other words the *Tārīkhnāma*.

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50 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 211.

51 *TB* 64.1/89.ult. = 65. Sadighi, *Mouvements*, 164n, 165 = *Junbishhā*, 209, 210.

52 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 408.9. Noted by Sadighi, *Mouvements*, 165 (omitted in the translation).

53 It is usually assumed to be Qubāwī who is speaking here, and it certainly seems most likely. Much of what he says, however, is close to the account of Abū ʾl-Maʿālī (wrote 484/1082) in terms of al-Muqannaʿ's career and his preaching alike, and this raises the suspicion that Abū ʾl-Maʿālī found it in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, then still in Narshakhī's Arabic version. But as a heresiographer, Abū ʾl-Maʿālī is more likely to have used Ibrāhīm directly.

54 Zaryāb, "Nukātī", 88 f.

Much of what follows in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* is indeed found in the *Tārīkhnāma*. Thus both the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* and the *Tārīkhnāma* tell us that | Jibraʾīl 410
stopped at Bukhārā and fought the Whiteclothed ones there; both mention that mangonels were constructed and diggers assembled at Bukhārā, that Saʿīd was governor of Herat and that he arrived with a large number of sheep, which he refused to sell, thereby causing the Turks to attack; both say that Saʿīd built houses and baths at al-Muqannaʿ's castle, that the castle consisted of an inner and an outer fortress, and that al-Muqannaʿ spent fourteen years in it; and both tell of how he poisoned his wives, except for a woman who lived to tell the tale, and that he killed himself by jumping into a hearth (cf. commentary, 1.4, 12.5, 13.1, 15.2, 20.1, 22.2, 5, 24.1). There are also some curious similarities of a less tangible kind. Both sources exaggerate the social or political status of the protagonists: Jibraʾīl is promoted to governor of Khurāsān while al-Muqannaʿ's Arab father-in-law turns into a descendant of a famous Qurashī in the *Tārīkhnāma* (sections 1, 23). In the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* Jibraʾīl is promoted to *wazīr* of the caliph while al-Muqannaʿ is first an officer in the Khurāsānī army and next *wazīr* as well, if only of the local governor.[55] The *Tārīkhnāma* regularly uses the formulaic phrase, "the news reached Muqannaʿ, who was grieved" (*ghamgīn shud*) (9.1; 15.1; 21.1); and it also tells us that when the caliph Abū Jaʿfar/al-Mahdī was informed of the fall of Samarqand, he wept and appointed Muʿādh governor (11.1 f.). The *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* says that when the Whiteclothed ones grew strong, some people came to Baghdad and told al-Mahdī, who was saddened (*diltang shud*) and sent many troops.[56]

The Muqannaʿ narrative cannot be dependent on the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, for it tells the story of the loss of Saʿīd's sheep and its aftermath in greater detail, in a garbled form which shows that further information has been lost (sections 13–14 and commentary). It also has the name of al-Muqannaʿ's castle, which is missing in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (cf. commentary, 15.1), and it tells of an attack by Kayyāk Ghūrī on Muʿādh b. Muslim at Paykand near Bukhārā which is unknown to the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*: all we learn here is that a Turk called Kūlār Tekīn was a problem at Bukhārā (cf. commentary, 12.2). Conversely, the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* cannot have used the Muqannaʿ narrative as we have it. It does not know that al-Muqannaʿ's Arab father in-law was supposed to have been the descendant of a famous Qurashī (cf. comm., section 23); nor does it have a name for the woman who lived to tell the tale, and it credits the story to a *dihqān* of Kish who claimed to be her grandson (cf. comm. *ad* 22.2). In

55 *TB* 64/90 = 65 f.

56 *TB* 66/93 = 67 f.

addition, the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* is extremely vague on everything to do with Samarqand, or indeed anything outside Bukhārā: it even claims that al-Mahdī came to Nishapur (of all places) to fight al-Muqannaʿ, a recollection of the fact that al-Mahdī had come to Nishapur to fight Ustādhsīs.[57] But on Bukhāran matters it has a wealth of information that cannot come from the Muqannaʿ narrative, just as the Muqannaʿ narrative has a wealth of information relating to Samarqand that cannot come from the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*.

In short, one would infer that when the two works have material in common, they are drawing on a shared source. This source must be an early version of
411 the | Muqannaʿ narrative. The *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* has the commander with the alleged name of Sughdiyān. It was through a misreading of a passage in the Muqannaʿ narrative that this name was formed, and it must have been via manuscripts containing the misreading that Sughdiyān moved to other sources (cf. comm., 4.4).

Qubāwī seems to have known the narrative in the full version in which it still contained an account of al-Muqannaʿ's early career. For in his own account of the first stage of al-Muqannaʿ's life, he tells us that al-Muqannaʿ's father was called Ḥakīm and that "he" (the father or al-Muqannaʿ) was an officer in the Khurāsānī army in the reign of al-Manṣūr; a couple of lines later, he says that al-Muqannaʿ was an officer in the Khurāsānī army during the revolution and that he served under a certain governor in the time of al-Manṣūr. What we have here are clearly two statements about the same man, not one about the father and another about the son:[58] two slightly different formulations of the same point have been taken from different sources and pasted into the same account. Since Qubāwī has just told us that his information comes from Ibrāhīm and al-Ṭabarī, one formulation is presumably Ibrāhīm's and the other "Ṭabarī's". If so, Qubāwī's version of the Muqannaʿ narrative did not start in the middle of al-Muqannaʿ's career, with the dispatch of Jibraʾīl to Khurāsān, but rather at the beginning. Unfortunately, he does not quote enough to tell us whether it opened with the words "When Abū Jaʿfar killed Abū Muslim".

One wonders if the Muqannaʿ narrative available in Bukhārā was a Bukhāran adaption of the Samarqandī *fatḥnāma*, put together by locals who had heard it declaimed in Samarqand. Here, as in the Samarqandī version preserved in the *Tārīkhnāma*, the narrative relating to the local struggle is filled with precise details which have sometimes been garbled in transmission, but which show

57 *TB* 66/93 = 68. For Mahdī's second visit to Nishapur, in connection with Ustādhsīs' revolt in 150/767 f., see Tab. iii, 355.

58 *TB* 64/90 = 65 f.; cf. Zaryāb, "Nukātī", 89.

the original narrator to have been well informed; it is in the shared second half, when outsiders take over, that the legendary features creep in. However this may be, the Bukhāran version was undoubtedly known in the time of Narshakhī (who completed the original *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* in 332/943 f.), not just in that of Qubāwī (who translated it into Persian with additions of his own close to two centuries later); for although it is mostly impossible to tell who wrote what in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, Narshakhī is explicitly identified as the narrator of the story of the woman who came to be known as Bānūqa.[59] The *dihqān* to whom he credits the story was probably named as the authority in the Muqannaʿ narrative he used. Alternatively, if he heard the *dihqān*, the latter will have claimed descent from the still nameless Bānūqa on the strength of the Muqannaʿ narrative, in whatever form he may have known it, for the story is undoubtedly fictitious: its melodramatic character apart, its purpose is to explain how al-Muqannaʿ's mode of death could be known if he had killed every one before he killed himself and disappeared without a trace. The Muqannaʿ narrative must also have been available to Abū 'l-Maʿālī, who wrote in 485/1092, for Sughdiyān, or rather Sughdigān, figures in his account, identified as the *dihqān* of Niyāzā who is not mentioned in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (cf. comm., 4.4).

This makes it highly likely that it was indeed the Muqannaʿ narrative that 412
al-Bīrūnī (d. after 442/1050) knew and translated from Persian into Arabic, as Sadighi suggested. If it was on the basis of this work that al-Bīrūnī summarized al-Muqannaʿ's story in his *Āthār*, it was the Bukhāran version that he knew, for it shares three distinctive points with the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*.[60] The possibility that he got them directly from the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* cannot be ruled out, since we do not know exactly what either the Muqannaʿ narrative or the section on al-Muqannaʿ in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* looked like at the time. But since the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* was still in Arabic, he clearly knew an additional work (or works) in Persian, and the chances that this was our Muqannaʿ narrative are high. He does not attribute it to al-Ṭabarī, perhaps because he deemed the ascription too obviously wrong to be worth mentioning, but more probably because it was not

59 *TB* 72/102= 102.

60 He too has the revolt lasting for fourteen years; he places the end of the revolt in 169, which could be a misreading of *TB*'s 167, and his statement that "the Mubayyiḍa and the Turks gathered around him, so he declared women and property to be lawful to them" is close to *TB*'s "al-Muqannaʿ called in the Turks and declared the blood and property of the Muslims lawful for them" (Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 211; *TB* 64, 66, 72/90, 93, 101 = 65, 68, 74). He also says that al-Muqannaʿ burnt himself, but so do many other sources, and he clearly used more than one (since he also says that the Muslims cut off his head and sent it to al-Mahdī at Aleppo).

current yet. It probably came to be attributed to al-Ṭabarī for the simple reason that he seemed the only possible author for so important an account of events in the by then remote past.

There is another echo of the Muqannaʿ narrative in the sixth/twelfth-century anonymous compilation *Mujmal al-tawārīkh*:[61] here the woman who lived to tell the tale says that al-Muqannaʿ behaved "like a drunken camel" and that he threw himself into the fire saying that he had led many people astray (compare 22.4–5), which is not in the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* (on which it may have drawn too);[62] and here as in the *Tārīkhnāma*, the story of al-Muqannaʿ is followed by an account of the deposition of ʿĪsā b. Mūsā. But the woman who survived here says that al-Muqannaʿ was like a drunken camel "foaming at the mouth", that he killed all quadrupeds as well, and that he threw all his possessions into the fire, which is in neither the *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* nor our Muqannaʿ narrative. Maybe the author was drawing on a version different from ours. A great many slightly different versions are likely to have been current until the Samarqandī narrative came to be locked in the two main forms in which it now survives. How that happened we do not know, and without a pre-Mongol manuscript it seems unlikely that we ever will.

61 *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa'l-qiṣaṣ*, ed. S. Najmabadi and S. Weber, Wiesbaden 2000, 262.

62 It has a brief account of his beliefs and says that al-Muqannaʿ heated the oven for three days, as we are also told in *TB* 73/102 = 74.

Appendix

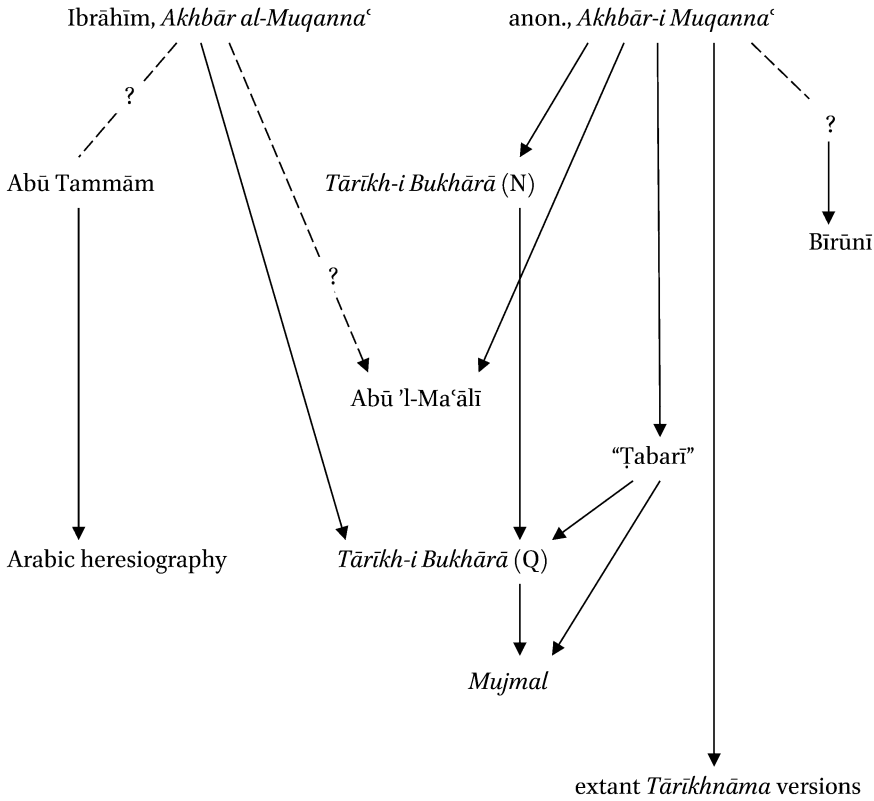

FIGURE 1 *The relationship between the main sources on al-Muqannaʿ are schematically presented in Figure 1. The arrowheads indicate recipients which also used other sources. Qubāwī gives the title of Ibrāhīm's work in Persian, but Ibrāhīm is most likely to have written in Arabic. For the relationship between him, Abū Tammām, and the Arabic heresiographical tradition, see P. Crone, "'Abū Tammām on the Mubayyiḍa", in O. Alí-de-Unzaga (ed.),* Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary, *London 2011* [*Ed.: included as article 5 in the present volume*]. *For Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, see above, n. 49.*

CHAPTER 8

27 Al-Jāḥiẓ on *Aṣḥāb al-Jahālāt* and the Jahmiyya*

For Fritz,
esteemed colleague,
old friend, Eidbruder

∴

In his book on animals al-Jāḥiẓ frequently refers to al-Naẓẓām's doctrine of latency (*kumūn*), that is, the idea that fire is hidden in the stone or wood from which it is produced.[1] In one passage on this question he depicts al-Naẓẓām as arguing against opponents who denied that there was any difference between good and bad seed, salty and sweet water, different types of soil, and suitable and unsuitable times of planting: the only difference lay in God's wish to create grain, grapes, olives and the like from them when they were combined, the result was not latent in the ingredients themselves. Al-Naẓẓām declared that anyone who held this to be true had agreed with the Jahmiyya, gone to *al-jahālāt*, and professed denial of the *ṭabā'iʿ* and the *ḥaqā'iq*.[2]

What is al-Naẓẓām referring to? *Jahālāt* means something like absurdities or nonsense, views revealing ignorance (*Ungereimtheiten*, as Van Ess suggests in his translation of another passage).[3] The absurdities relate to two denials associated with the followers of Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746), the Transoxa-

* This article owes its genesis to the kindness of Mairaj Syed, who gave me a print-out from al-waraq.com of all the passages on *al-jahālāt* in al-Jāḥiẓ in connection with a graduate seminar I taught at Princeton University in 2006. I am also grateful to Michael Cook and Masoud Jafari Jazi for comments and corrections.

1 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *K. al-Ḥayawān*, ed. ʿA.-S.M. Hārūn, 7 vols, Cairo, 1938–1945, esp. v, pp. 6 ff.; cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn., Leiden, 1960–2004 (henceforth *EI²*), art. 'kumūn' (Van Ess).

2 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* (n. 1 above), v, p. 93 (*wa-man qāla bi-dhālika … qāla ka-qawl al-Jahmiyya fī jamīʿ al-maqālāt wa-ṣāra ilā 'l-jahālāt wa-qāla bi-inkār al-ṭabā'iʿ wa'l-ḥaqā'iq*).

3 J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, Berlin and New York, 1991–1997 (henceforth *TG*), VI, p. 31. References to *TG* alone are to Van Ess's translations (which include philological discussion and further references); references to Van Ess, *TG*, are to his analysis.

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nian *mawlā* and rebel whose beliefs are viewed with disfavour in all surviving sources. The first denial is of the *ṭabā'i'*, the four elementary qualities which both al-Naẓẓām and al-Jāḥiẓ himself saw as key constituents of the natural world. Jahm and/or the Jahmiyya denied that these entities generated anything, or even that they existed, as we read elsewhere in al-Jāḥiẓ's animal book.[4] The second denial is of the *ḥaqā'iq*, which Frank translates as 'essential characters' or 'essential natures', reading the word as largely synonymous with *ṭabā'i'*.[5] Van Ess opts for the 'core of things' (*Wesenskern*) or 'the real powers of action' (*die realen Wirkkräfte*) and relates the statement to Jahm's denial of free will: God governed everything, humans were just marionettes in his hands.[6]

Other passages in al-Jāḥiẓ, however, show that the *jahālāt* had to do with 28
perceptions. Al-Jāḥiẓ tells us that he had written a book against the Jahmiyya *fī 'l-idrāk wa-fī qawlihim fī 'l-jahālāt*, 'about perception and their doctrine concerning the *jahālāt*'.[7] Here *al-jahālāt* seems to be used as a technical term, not simply as a term of abuse. In a more expansive vein, al-Jāḥiẓ cites al-Naẓẓām as remarking, in polemics against Ḍirār b. 'Amr, that he who says that animals live without blood must also deny the *ṭabā'i'* and reject the *ḥaqā'iq* in accordance with Jahm b. Ṣafwān's doctrine about the heating of fire and cooling of snow, food and poison, and perception and sensory impressions (*al-idrāk wa'l-ḥiss*); but that, he says, is another chapter (*dhālika bāb ākhar*) *fī 'l-jahālāt*.[8] Again, the *jahālāt* seems to be a technical term for a doctrine relating to perception, and here too the doctrine involves denial of the elementary qualities and the *ḥaqā'iq*, but this time the *jahālāt* are cast as the consequence of holding that animals live without blood. How could anyone make so strange a postulate? Ḍirār allegedly held that blood was only created when you saw it.[9] Elsewhere al-Naẓẓām reiterates that whoever denies the doctrine of latency will eventually enter *fī bāb al-jahālāt*. Here he goes through a long sequence of *ilzām* (whoever says A must also say B and so also C, etc.) in order to show that whoever denies that there is fire in the stone thereby joins those who argue that there is no water in the water skin on the grounds that the water is only cre-

4 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* (n. 1 above), IV, p. 288, l. 6; V, p. 11, ll. 1–2; cf. also IV, p. 74, l. 4 where Jahm and Ḥafṣ al-Fard are contrasted with those who believe in the *ṭabā'i'*.

5 R. Frank, 'The Neoplatonism of Ǧahm b. Ṣafwān', *Le Muséon*, 78, 1965, pp. 395–424 (404–405).

6 Cf. Van Ess, *TG*, II, p. 498; *TG*, VI, p. 31.

7 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* (n. 1 above), I, p. 10, l. 1. The text has *al-jihāt*, but the variant *al-jahālāt* is clearly to be preferred; cf. V, p. 7, ll. 1–3, where Van Ess also emends *al-jihāt* to *al-jahālāt* (*TG*, VI, p. 29 and n. 16).

8 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* (n. 1 above), V, p. 11, l. 3 (*TG*, VI, pp. 31–32).

9 Ibid., p. 10, l. 5 (*TG*, VI, p. 31).

ated when you touch its wetness, and who say the same about the sun, the moon, the stars and the mountains when they disappear from sight (i.e. that they cease to exist).[10] Apparently, then, the Jahmite doctrine regarding perceptions and *jahālāt* against which al-Jāḥiẓ had directed his book was to the effect that nothing exists until you perceive it, and that it only exists as long as you perceive it. Al-Naẓẓām's argument is that if, like Ḍirār, you deny that there is fire in the stone before you rub it, you have no option but to go with Jahm: you must also deny that there is blood in the bodies of animals before they bleed, that there is water in the skin before you touch it, and that the sun and the moon exist when you do not see them. In short, your only alternative to the doctrine of latency is so crazy that you have to agree with al-Naẓẓām.

Jahm's doctrine *fī 'l-jahālāt* should undoubtedly be related to his view of God. He famously held God to be wholly other, far beyond our senses and intellect, utterly removed from any conceptualization or description by us.[11] Since everything we are capable of thinking and saying is tied to the created world, we have no way to envisage him. We cannot even say that he is a *shay'*,
29 a thing or something, for all | things are his creation, and there is no thing like him (*laysa ka-mithlihi shay'*, Q. 42:11).[12] Some thought that Jahm must have been an atheist, since his object of worship was an unknown entity.[13] But in fact, God was everything to him, quite literally; for although his object of worship was wholly transcendent, He was also wholly immanent, mixed (*mumtazij*) in with His creation,[14] pervading everything, without being in a particular place.[15] Everything that happened in this world was His action, including everything we did ourselves. There was no causality, merely things coming in association.[16] We would describe ourselves as the originators of our acts, but we were not, any

10 Ibid., pp. 7–9 (*TG*, VI, pp. 29–30). For the *Konsequenzmacherei*, see Van Ess, *TG*, III, p. 41.

11 Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Radd 'alā 'l-Zanādiqa wa'l-Jahmiyya* (transl. *TG*, V, p. 222); Khushaysh in al-Malaṭī, *K. al-Tanbīh wa'l-radd 'alā ahl al-ahwā' wa'l-bida'*, ed. S. Dedering, Istanbul, 1936, p. 70; cf. *TG*, II, pp. 499 ff.

12 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd* (n. 11 above; transl. *TG*, V, p. 222); differently formulated in al-Maqdisī, *K. al-Bad' wa'l-ta'rīkh*, ed. C. Huart, 6 vols, Paris, 1899–1919, V, p. 146.

13 Cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd* (n. 11 above), p. 32.

14 Khushaysh in al-Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* (n. 11 above), p. 6 (*TG*, V, p. 200); cf. Van Ess, *TG*, II, pp. 501–502.

15 Thus the Jahmiyya in al-Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* (n. 11 above), p. 76 (*TG*, V, p. 220); al-Dārimī, *al-Radd 'alā 'l-Jahmiyya*, ed. G. Vitestam, Lund and Leiden, 1960, pp. 17, 42, 59; cf. p. 96; Frank, 'Neoplatonism' (n. 5 above), pp. 403–404.

16 Ibn Taymiyya in Y. Qāḍī, *Maqālāt al-Jahm* [*sic*] *b. Ṣafwān*, Riyad, 2005, II, p. 724.

more than the trees or the sun were the real agents when they were described as shaking in the wind or setting. In reality (*fī ʾl-ḥaqīqa*), nobody apart from God did anything.[17]

The doctrine about *jahālāt* amounts to a further claim that apart from God, nothing really exists. We see the blood of animals, the sun and the moon, we feel the wetness of water, experience the cooling effect of snow, and the different effects of food and poison, but what we see, feel, hear, smell and taste exists only in relation to us, not as independent entities: take us away and they too disappear. They have no more reality than do our own acts, and no more effect: the mountains do not exist, nor do the sun and moon; fire does not heat, snow does not cool, food does not nourish us, poison does not kill us, and the elementary qualities account for nothing. In short, the world that we perceive through our senses does not include any *ḥaqāʾiq*, things or acts endowed with objective existence. Only God exists, and of Him we can say nothing because our sensory and intellectual equipment is geared to the phenomenal world. In relation to Him all our ideas are mere imagination, mere *wahm*. Anyone who said that his *wahm* had reached God was an unbeliever, as Jahm is reported to have declared.[18]

To Richard Frank, Jahm came across as a Neoplatonist.[19] Fritz Zimmermann was not persuaded, though he did grant that Jahm might have picked up a Neoplatonist commonplace or two.[20] One wonders if even the commonplaces should | not be struck from the record. God does lie beyond human conceptualization in Neoplatonism, but the sublunar world of the Neoplatonists is not lacking in reality or reducible to a flow of short-lived and ultimately unreal sense impressions. Van Ess, although more taken with Frank's argument than Zimmermann, considered the possibility that we should look to Indian systems rather than Neoplatonism for the roots of Jahm's thought.[21] This is surely right. Jahm is said to have come from Balkh, the capital of Ṭukhāristān (ancient Bac- 30

17 Al-Ashʿarī, *K. Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1929–1933, p. 279 (*TG*, V, p. 214); cf. Van Ess, *TG*, II, pp. 498–499, rightly stressing that this was not a doctrine of predestination: there was no divine foreknowledge, and no plan.

18 M. Bernand, 'Le *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā l-bidaʿ* d'Abū Muṭīʿ Makḥūl al-Nasafī', *Annales Islamologiques*, 16, 1980, p. 105; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs*, Cairo, n.d., pp. 20–21.

19 See the reference given above, n. 5.

20 F.W. Zimmermann, 'The Origins of the So-Called Theology of Aristotle', in J. Kraye, W.F. Ryan, and C.B. Schmitt (eds), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages*, London, 1986, pp. 110–240 (135–136).

21 Van Ess, *TG*, II, pp. 499–500, 504.

tria), which was still predominantly Buddhist at the time,[22] and he was based at Tirmidh, on the border between Ṭukhāristān and Sogdia, which also had a Buddhist presence.[23] He is said to have engaged in disputation with Buddhists (Sumaniyya), who induced such doubts in him that he stopped praying for forty days, saying that he would not pray to someone he did not know; then, according to Khushaysh b. Aṣram (d. 253/867), he 'derived this doctrine (*ishtaqqa hādhā 'l-kalām*) from that of the Sumaniyya'.[24] In other sources the Sumanīs ask Jahm how he can know that God exists when he cannot perceive him with the senses and Jahm replies by asking them if they do not have a spirit which is equally inaccessible to the senses, which they admit. Here the Sumanīs are indistinguishable from the empiricist Dahrīs of Iraq,[25] and Jahm does not borrow anything from them. In Khushaysh's version the issue may be the unknowability rather than the existence of God, but it is still hard to see what Sumanī doctrine it could be that he borrowed. If we go by al-Jāḥiẓ rather than Khushaysh, the most plausible answer, in so far as a mere Islamicist can judge, is a philosophical doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In the Abhidharma, a body of systematizing literature dated to between the third century BC and the first century AD, a distinction is made between

22 Al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, ed. M.I. Khān, Hyderabad, 1962–1992, III, p. 437, s.v. 'al-Jahmī'; cf. Van Ess, *TG*, II, p. 494; H. Yang, Y. Jan, S. Iida and L.W. Preston (eds and trs), *The Hye Ch'o Diary*, Seoul, n.d., § 25 (I owe my knowledge of this work to K. van Bladel, 'The Bactrian Background of the Barmakids', in A. Akasoy, C. Burnett and R. Yoeli-Tlalim [eds], *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, Farnham, 2011, pp. 43–88 [51–52]).

23 Noted by Hsüan-tsang (d. 664) in S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, 1, London, 1906, p. 39; cf. also P. Leriche, 'Termez antique et médiévale', in P. Leriche et al. (eds), *La Bactriane au carrefour des routes et des civilisations de l'Asie Centrale: Termez et les villes de Bactriane-Tokharestan* (actes du colloque de Termez 1997), Paris, 2001, p. 80; P. Leriche and S. Pidaev, 'Termez in Antiquity', in J. Cribb and G. Herrmann (eds), *After Alexander: Central Asia before Islam*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 189–190.

24 Al-Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* (n. 11 above), p. 77.

25 Cf. the summary and references in Van Ess, *TG* II, pp. 503–504 (one version replaces the Sumanīs with a Greek). Jahm defeats their question how he can know that God exists when He is not accessible to the senses with reference to their own possession of a spirit that they cannot see, hear, etc. Abū Ḥanīfa defeats a Dahrī with the same reply in H. Daiber, 'Rebellion gegen Gott. Formen atheistischen Denkens im frühen Islam', in F. Niewöhner and O. Pluta (eds), *Atheismus im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance*, Wiesbaden, 1999, pp. 40–43. Compare Gregory of Nyssa (d. after 394), *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, transl. C.P. Roth, Crestwood NY, 2002, p. 44, where Macrina conversely dispels doubts about the existence of the soul with reference to the existence of God, who is not known by sense perceptions either.

two truths, one conventional, relating to the way things appear, the other ultimate, | relating to things 'as they really are', and an attempt is made to 31
isolate the irreducible constituent elements of existence, known as *dharma*s. The *dharma*s were found to be momentary forces, either mental or physical, which rose in a continual stream and existed for a very short time, during which they had real existence, *svabhāva*, 'own-existence' or 'self-nature', an essence that distinguished them from one another. They could be described, in Skilton's words, as 'those unique, elemental forces which constitute, or underlie, the flow of the conventional world'.[26] The phenomena that we perceive as real in our everyday world were only 'conceptual' (or 'secondary') existents. They were 'empty' (*śūnya*), meaning devoid of self-existence, a quality which only the momentary forces possessed.[27]

The 'Perfection of Wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*)' sūtras, which are among the earliest Mahāyāna works, criticized this view, postulating that even the *dharma*s lacked self-existence: all things were empty. This doctrine became the basis of Mahāyāna philosophy, generating two classical schools. One is the Madhyamaka, the 'Middle Way', founded by Nāgārjuna in the second century AD and still upheld by an order in Tibet today. Nāgārjuna accepted that nothing whatever had self-existence: all things were empty, not just the short-lived *dharma*s which had so far been understood as what the Muslims called *ḥaqā'iq*, but also *saṁsāra*, *nirvāṇa*, the Buddha, and emptiness itself.[28] Some Buddhists took this to mean that Nāgārjuna was a nihilist (in the ontological rather than the moral sense), others that he held ultimate reality to be beyond conceptualization, while a third interpretation is that he rejected the very idea of an ultimate truth as incoherent; he has also been understood as a sceptic and as guilty of philosophical error.[29] That his position amounted to nihilism was the view of the second school, the Yogācāra (alias Cittamātra, 'mind-only'), founded by Asaṅga and expounded by Vasubandhu in the fourth century AD. They postulated that something really did exist, namely mental things—streams of perception and

26 A. Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism*, Birmingham, 1994, p. 89.

27 P. Williams and A. Tribe, *Buddhist Thought: a Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*, Abingdon and New York, 2000, pp. 87 ff.

28 Williams and Tribe, *Buddhist Thought* (n. 27 above), pp. 131 ff.; Skilton, *Concise History* (n. 26 above), pp. 115 ff.; M. Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy*, Aldershot, 2007, ch. 9; J.L. Garfield, *Empty Words: Buddhist Philosophy and Cross-cultural Interpretation*, Oxford, 2002.

29 Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy* (n. 28 above), pp. 181 ff.; Garfield, *Empty Words* (n. 28 above), chs 1, 5; D. Burton, *Emptiness Appraised: a Critical Study of Nāgārjuna's Philosophy*, Richmond (Surrey), 1999. The literature on him is enormous.

emotion. There were no external objects. 'The content of a sensory experience presents itself as an external object when no such object exists', Vasubandhu said; they were like the hair on the moon perceived by those with cataracts, the yellow colour seen by a jaundiced person looking at a white shell, or like things seen in a dream.[30] Certainly, mind was empty, but in the new sense that it was free of the duality between perceiving subject and perceived object.

32 What we are told about Jahm b. Ṣafwān could readily be understood as a Muslim reformulation of one or the other of these teachings. By his time, they are likely to have interacted both with each other and with local culture in eastern Iran, as they did in China, but the fact that his doctrine centered on perceptions suggests that the Yogācāra are of particular relevance. Jahm denied not just that there was fire in the stone, blood in animals, or water in the water-skin, the three examples related to the doctrine of *kumūn*, but also that the sun, moon, stars and mountains had real existence: they were created (*yukhlaqu*) when they were seen. Actually, *yukhlaqu* is Van Ess's emendation. The text twice uses the fifth form: *innamā huwa shay'un takhallaqa/tukhulliqa ʿinda 'l-ru'ya*, 'it is only a thing which seems to be/which is forged when it is seen'; and *innamā takhallaqa/tukhulliqa ʿinda ḥall ribāṭihā*, 'it merely feigns to be/is merely forged when its [the water-skin's] strings are untied'.[31] It probably should not be emended. Jahm apparently held the sense impression to be an illusion: in Yogācāra terms, the mental image was real, but there was no object to produce it.

This throws some light on the so-called Sūfisṭā'iyya, the 'sophists' credited with sceptical views in terms so stereotyped that they sound like a mere heresiographical fossil. The Sūfisṭā'iyya claimed that 'all things follow imagination and conjecture (*inna 'l-ashyā' kullahā ʿalā 'l-tawahhum wa'l-ḥisbān*), people only grasp things in accordance with their minds, in reality there is no truth (*lā ḥaqq fī 'l-ḥaqīqa*)'.[32] It is often hard to tell whether this statement, cited time and again in slightly different versions, means that we cannot know the true

30 Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy* (n. 28 above), pp. 149 ff.; cf. also the accounts in Williams and Tribe, *Buddhist Thought* (n. 27 above), pp. 152 ff.; Skilton, *Concise History* (n. 26 above), pp. 121 ff. For a philosophical test of the position, see J. Feldman, 'Vasubandhu's Illusion Argument and the Parasitism of Illusion upon Veridical Experience', *Philosophy East and West*, 55, 2005, pp. 529–541.

31 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* (n. 1 above), v, p. 9, l. 7, p. 10, ll. 1–3; *TG*, vi, 29n, 30n.

32 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, ed. A.A. Amīn, A. al-Zayn and I. al-Abyārī, Cairo, 1940–1953, ii, p. 407; cited by J. van Ess, 'Skepticism in Islamic Religious Thought', *al-Abḥāth*, 21, 1968, pp. 1–18 (1); cf. id., *Die Erkenntnislehre des ʿAḍudaddīn al-Īcī*, Wiesbaden, 1966, pp. 184 ff., 221–236.

nature of external reality (the world beyond our senses being closed to us) or that there is no such a thing as an external reality (the world we experience being an illusion); but mostly it is about the limits of knowledge.[33] There is an unusually clear example of the statement as a denial of external reality, however, in Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who cites it as 'everything seen and sensed is devoid of truth/reality (*jamīʿ mā yurā wa-yuḥassu lā ḥaqīqa lahā*); it is merely according to (*ʿalā ṭarīq*) imagination (*khaylūla*) and surmise (*ḥisbān*); we merely see and witness these things as we see them in a dream, there is no truth/reality to them, nor to ourselves, nor to anything that is seen or sensed, nor to anything in this world'.[34] A Yogācārin could probably have endorsed this formulation, provided that imagination and surmise were understood as erroneous assumptions about the existence of objects. But there cannot be much doubt that the wording of the | stereotyped statement is Greek, for its core part sounds like 33
an Arabic version of a statement in Epiphanius (d. 403) according to which the pre-Socratic Leucippus held that 'all things exist according to imagination and opinion, not according to the truth (κατὰ φαντασίαν δὲ καὶ δόκησιν τὰ πάντα γίνεσθαι καὶ μηδὲν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν)'.[35] Whatever exactly Leucippus may have meant by this, he did not mean to deny the existence of objective reality (which in his view took the form of atoms). The same holds true of other Greek philosophers, whether pre-Socratic or later, who stressed the unreliability of our sense impressions: their point was not that objects do not exist, but rather that our perceptions are not a reliable guide to their true nature (we do not see them as atoms, for example). The Academic Sceptics only went so far as to profess themselves unable to say whether objects exist, and when Carneades adduced perceptions in dreams, his message was that there is no such thing as a criterion of truth, not that there is no such thing as an object.[36] It is similarly in illustration of our inability to know the nature of things that the dream is adduced

33 See for example al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, Istanbul, 1928, pp. 319–320 (with three different positions); Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya wa'l-amal fī sharḥ al-milal wa'l-niḥal*, ed. J. Mashkour, Damascus, 1990, p. 14 (with two).

34 Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, ed. Ṣ. al-Ṣāwī, Tehran, 1977, p. 150. The dream also figures in other versions, e.g. al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt* (n. 17 above), p. 433; al-Māturīdī, *K. al-Tawḥīd*, ed. F. Kholeif, Beirut, 1970, p. 156; al-Maqdisī, *Bad'* (n. 12 above), I, p. 48; later references in Van Ess, *Īcī* (n. 32 above), pp. 185–186. There is never any suggestion that the reference is to the Qur'ānic *fata morgana* (24:39).

35 H. Diels (ed.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3rd ed., 2 vols, Berlin, 1912, II, A 33; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, transl. F. Williams, 2 vols, Leiden, 1987/1994, II, p. 647.

36 R.J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics*, London and New York, 1995, p. 16; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians*, i. 159, 403 (Loeb edition, ed. and transl. R.G. Bury, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1935).

by other Greek Sceptics.[37] But Vasubandhu knew for sure that objects do not exist, and it is in this vein that he adduces the comparison with the dream, which is a stock image in the *prajñāpāramitā* literature.[38] It also appears time and again in the Khotanese *Book of Zambasta*.[39] It would appear that a Buddhist affirmation of the non-existence of objects had travelled to Iraq, where its opponents assimilated it to Sceptical views of Greek origin regarding the limits of our knowledge and called it 'sophist'. Another example is the water which is just a mirage: Greek Sceptics do not seem to have used it, but it was commonplace in India, much used by the Yogācāra, and it is duly credited to a Sūfisṭā'ī in third/ninth-century Iraq.[40]

Jahm undoubtedly held our sense impressions, like everything else, to be created by God. It is the obvious solution for a monotheist who denies that we can infer from sense impressions to objects: Berkeley, another idealist (again in the ontological rather than moral sense), also held our sensory images ('ideas') to occur in our minds because God caused them to do so. In short, al-Jāḥiẓ's
34 infor|mation suggests that Khushaysh is right: Jahm did indeed owe something fundamental to the Buddhists. It could have been into an originally Buddhist family that he had been born.[41]

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37 See the references in Van Ess, *Īcī*, (n. 32 above), p. 184; also Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians* (n. 36 above), i. 88, on Anaxarchus and Monimus (both 4th century BC); id., *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, i. 104 (the 4th mode of Scepticism) (Loeb edition, ed. and transl. R.G. Bury, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1933).

38 E. Conze, 'The Ontology of the Prajñāpāramitā', *Philosophy East and West*, 3, 1953, pp. 117–129 (124); cf. also I.C. Harris, *The Continuity of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism*, Leiden, 1991, pp. 29, 46.

39 *The Book of Zambasta: a Khotanese Poem on Buddhism*, transl. R.E. Emmerick, London, 1968, ch. 2, § 210; ch. 3, §§ 105, 107, 137; ch. 4, § 89; ch. 6, § 52, etc.

40 J.J. Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied*, Albany, 1997, p. 81; J. Fück, 'Some Hitherto Unpublished Texts on the Mu'tazilite Movement from Ibn al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*', in S.M. Abdullah (ed.), *Professor Muḥammad Shafi' Presentation Volume*, Lahore, 1955, pp. 70–71; cited in Van Ess, 'Skepticism' (n. 32 above), pp. 1–2.

41 This poses the question how far Buddhism should be seen as playing a role in the formation of Ḍirār's doctrine too. Ḍirār, who was denounced as a Jahmite, denied that things had any substance: bodies were simply bundles of accidents, and some (but not all) of these accidents were created anew every moment (Van Ess, *TG*, III, pp. 38–40). This places Ḍirār closer to the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness, which is also based on a denial of substance, than to the classical *kalām* doctrine, in which the atoms are bearers of the accidents (cf. A. von Rospatt, 'Einige Berührungspunkte zwischen der buddhistischen Augenblicklichkeitslehre und der Vorstellung von der Momentanheit der Akzidenzien (*'araḍ, a'rāḍ*) in der islamischen Scholastik', in *Annäherung an das Fremde*, ed. H. Preissler

The Afterlife

In another passage al-Jāḥiẓ links the *aṣḥāb al-jahālāt* with the Dahrīs, elsewhere in his work characterized as empiricists who did not believe in God, prophets, life after death, or any other metaphysical postulate.[42] Here he remarks that the Dahrīs denied the existence of demons, *jinn*, angels, veridical dreams and charms, and that in their view 'their matter will not be completed without the participation of the *aṣḥāb al-jahālāt*'.[43] It sounds like sarcasm. Maybe al-Jāḥiẓ is simply linking the two as groups known for absurd denials of obviously real things, but we do hear of Jahmites who rejected the afterlife, claiming that the spirit died with the body, and who did not believe in veridical dreams.[44] Since al-Jāḥiẓ is being so cryptic, however, I will not pursue the question further here.

The Rational Nature of All Beings

In his chapter on the gecko al-Jāḥiẓ tells us that certain *ḥadīth*s about this animal are adduced by 'the *aṣḥāb al-jahālāt* and those who claim that all things are endowed with reason (*nāṭiqa*) and that they form nations whose course of affairs is like that of human beings (*umam majrāhum majrā ʾl-nās*)'.[45] These people also adduced a barrage of Qur'ānic passages in which animals, birds, stones, mountains, heaven and earth speak or otherwise behave like human beings. Al-Jāḥiẓ continues that 'the Jahmiyya and those who deny the causative power of the elementary qualities (*ījād al-ṭabāʾiʿ*) adopt a position (*dhahabat … madhhaban*), and Ibn Ḥāʾiṭ and those who gather around his crowd from among the *aṣḥāb al-jahālāt* adopt a position, and some people who are not

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and H. Stein, Stuttgart, 1998, pp. 523–530). When Fritz Zimmermann brought Ḍirār's doctrine to Sorabji's attention, the latter related it to the comparable idea of bodies as bundles of properties in Neoplatonism (R. Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion*, London, 1988, p. 57; taken up by Van Ess, *TG*, III, pp. 42–44). The Neoplatonists do not seem to have cast the properties as momentary, however.

42 Cf. P. Crone, 'The Dahrīs According to al-Jāḥiẓ', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 63, 2010–2011, pp. 63–82 [Ed.: reprinted in P. Crone, *Islam, the Ancient Near East and Varieties of Godlessness*, vol. 3 of *Collected Studies in Three Volumes*, ed. H. Siurua, Leiden, 2016, art. 5].

43 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* (n. 1 above), II, p. 139: *anna ʾl-amr lā yatimmu lahum illā bi-mushārika ahl al-jihāt* [*sic*]. For the emendation of *al-jihāt*, see above, n. 7.

44 Al-Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* (n. 11 above), p. 77; transl. *TG*, V, p. 221.

45 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* (n. 1 above), IV, p. 287.

35 *mutakallim*s adopt (a position), and follow | the literal meaning of *ḥadīth* and poetry, claiming that stones think and reason (*ta'qilu wa-tanṭiqu*), and that they have just been deprived of speech (*al-manṭiq*), whereas birds and wild animals are as they used to be (*ʿalā mā kānat ʿalayhi*). They say: bats, sparrow-hawks, and frogs are obedient and rewarded, while scorpions, snakes, kites, ravens, dogs and the like are disobedient and punished'.[46] Elsewhere he tells us that some people (probably Dahrīs and/or Zindīqs) found fault with the Qur'ānic story of Solomon and the hoopoe (*hudhud*) on the grounds that the hoopoe is presented as subject to reward and punishment: this, they argued, implied that some animals were subject to commands and prohibitions, reward and punishment, heaven and hell, which in turn implied that solidarity (*walāya*) with some animals and hostility (*ʿadāwa*) to others were required; and since the genus (*jins*) applied to all its members, this would be true of 'all of them', apparently meaning all animals, though everyone agreed (*ʿinda jamīʿ al-nās*) that the hoopoe had less knowledge than ants, lice, elephants, monkeys, pigs and pigeons, who formed nations and so had superiority in terms of knowledge, intelligence and prophets. And all this, they pointed out, was nonsense on a par with the superstitions of the pre-Islamic Arabs.[47] Al-Jāḥiẓ rejects their reading of the Qur'ānic story, adding that only the Manichaeans (al-Māniyya) and the *aṣḥāb al-jahālāt* believed this kind of thing.[48]

In the first passage the Jahmiyya are distinguished from the *aṣḥāb al-jahālāt*, who are ranged with Ibn Ḥā'iṭ instead: elsewhere al-Jāḥiẓ links the latter with *juhhāl al-ṣūfiyya*.[49] But both the Jahmiyya and Ibn Ḥā'iṭ's group, as well as some non-*mutakallim*s, are reported to believe that all things around them, even stones, are endowed with reason and moral responsibility; and in the second passage al-Jāḥiẓ subsumes all three groups under the label of *aṣḥāb al-jahālāt*, this time adding the Manichaeans.

Al-Jāḥiẓ seems to be the only source to associate the Jahmiyya with such beliefs, but Aḥmad b. Ḥā'iṭ (or Khābiṭ) and his associates are well-known for them. Ibn Ḥā'iṭ, a Basran and pupil of al-Naẓẓām like al-Jāḥiẓ himself, held that all living beings formed a single species endowed with reason and legal/moral responsibility (*taklīf*), that all living beings had received prophets, even donkeys, birds, fleas, and lice, and that moral responsibility rested on the spirit alone, not on bodies, which were mere forms (*qawālib*) that the spirit put on, wandering from one form to another: he believed in reincarnation,

46 Ibid., IV, p. 288.

47 Ibid., IV, pp. 79–80.

48 Ibid., IV, p. 81, ult.

49 Ibid., V, p. 424; transl. *TG*, VI, p. 214.

too.[50] One might have thought that he held donkeys, birds, fleas, lice and so on to have received their | prophets as humans and to have been punished 36
for their unbelief by reincarnation in lowly forms, but apparently he did not: he and other *juhhāl al-ṣūfiyya* would adduce Q. 16:68 (*wa-awḥā rabbuka ilā 'l-naḥl*) as proof that bees had received prophets,[51] and some sources explicitly tell us that he and other believers in reincarnation held the prophets to have been sent as animals to their own kind. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī mentions their use of the Qur'ānic story of the hoopoe, Solomon's ant and other passages, too.[52] Nobody apart from al-Jāḥiẓ seems to say that Ibn Ḥā'iṭ held even plants, stones and other inanimate things to be rational, nor is it documented for his pupil, Aḥmad b. Ayyūb b. Bānūsh or Mānūsh or the like (d. 258), who subscribed to much the same doctrines, including reincarnation, though he did not believe that animals were morally responsible.[53] But of the (third/ninth-century?) Muʿtazilite al-Qaḥṭabī we are told that he included heaven and earth among the spirits which had refused the primordial test from which angels, humans and demons had emerged (according to Ibn Ḥā'iṭ's myth), adducing Q. 33:72 ('We offered the trust [*amāna*] to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to take it on'); he too believed in reincarnation.[54] And of yet another pupil of al-Naẓẓām's, Faḍl al-Ḥadathī, we hear that he held animals, plants and inorganic things, even stones, to contain transformed spirits which were undergoing punishment.[55] Given that the mountains are mentioned along with the heavens and the earth in Q. 33:72, the verse adduced by al-Qaḥṭabī, one suspects that al-Qaḥṭabī, and quite possibly Ibn Ḥā'iṭ too, shared his view. The verse is included in al-Jāḥiẓ' discussion of the believers in the rationality of all things, and Faḍl al-Ḥadathī also belonged to the *ṣūfiyyat al-muʿtazila*, or the *juhhāl al-ṣūfiyya*, as al-Jāḥiẓ preferred to call them, refusing to recognize such people as Muʿtazilites.[56]

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50 Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, ed. M. Badr, Cairo, 1910, pp. 255–256; Ibn Ḥazm, *K. al-Faṣl fī 'l-milal wa'l-ahwā' wa'l-niḥal*, Cairo, 1317–1321, I, p. 78; al-Maqdisī, *Bad'* (n. 12 above), III, p. 8; Van Ess, *TG*, III, pp. 430 ff.

51 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān* (n. 1 above), V, p. 424; transl. *TG*, VI, p. 214.

52 Ibn Ḥazm, *Faṣl* (n. 50 above), IV, p. 198; Abū Yaʿlā Ibn al-Farrā', *al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. W.Z. Ḥaddād, Beirut, 1974, p. 110; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, Tehran, 1413, XII, p. 215, *ad* 6:38.

53 Al-Baghdādī, *Farq* (n. 50 above), pp. 258–259; transl. *TG*, VI, p. 220; Ibn Ḥazm, *Faṣl* (n. 50 above), IV, p. 198.

54 Al-Baghdādī, *Farq* (n. 50 above), pp. 255, 259 (wrongly al-Qaḥṭī); *TG*, III, pp. 443–444, VI, p. 221.

55 Abū Yaʿlā, *Muʿtamad* (n. 52 above), p. 110; transl. *TG*, VI, p. 219.

56 Ps.-Nāshi', *K. Uṣūl al-niḥal*, § 83, in J. van Ess, *Frühe Muʿtazilitische Häresiographie*, Beirut,

The group identified as non-*mutakallim*s in al-Jāḥiẓ's first passage may be or include Khurramīs. They certainly saw all living beings and, in a late example, even the earth as sentient, though we are not told that they saw them as rational; and they too believed in reincarnation, into humans and animals alike.[57] But the reference could also be to the Manichaeans, whom al-Jāḥiẓ
37 explicitly mentions in | the second passage, though their ranks did include *mutakallim*s. Al-Jāḥiẓ is certainly right that they believed such things. They held that part of 'the divine nature permeates all things in heaven and earth and under the earth, that it is found in all bodies, dry and moist, in all kinds of flesh, and in all seeds of trees, herbs, men and animals … bound, oppressed, polluted', as Augustine said; even the earth, wood, and stones had sense.[58] 'If a person walks upon the ground, he injures the earth; and if he moves his hand, he injures the air, for the air is the soul of humans and living creatures, both fowl and fish, and creeping things', as another opponent summarized their view,[59] again with perfect accuracy.[60] Muslim authors observe that the Manicheans had to avoid injuring animals, or all living things, occasionally mentioning plants, trees, water, and fire as well,[61] but they never seem to include the earth or stones in their statements, just as they do not usually do so in connection with the Mu'tazilite Sufis. Only al-Jāḥiẓ mentions that the Manichaeans and the 'ignorant Sufis' alike held even solid things

1971, p. 50 (§ 83). Abū Ya'lā assigns him to the *ghulāt al-Rāfiḍa* (*Mu'tamad* [n. 52 above], p. 110).

57 Ps.-Nāshi', *Uṣūl* (n. 56 above), § 58; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. R. Tajaddud, Tehran, 1971, p. 406, l. 4; transl. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, 2 vols, New York and London, 1970, II, p. 817; al-Maqdisī, *Bad'* (n. 12 above), IV, p. 31; W. Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, Albany, 1988, p. 10; *EI²*, art. 'Khurramiyya'; *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. Yarshater, London, 1982–, art. 'Ḵorramiyya'.

58 Augustine in J.D. BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body*, Baltimore, 2000, p. 77.

59 *Acts of Archelaos* 10, cited in BeDuhn, *Manichaean Body* (n. 58 above), p. 79.

60 Cf. H.-J. Klimkeit, 'Manichäische und buddhistische Beichtformeln aus Turfan. Beobachtungen zur Beziehung zwischen Gnosis und Mahāyāna', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 29, 1977, pp. 193–228 (204–205), citing the book of confessions preserved in Uighur with further discussion. Ephrem knew the Manichaeans to hold trees, fields, and even the ground itself to exude light (BeDuhn, *Manichaean Body* [n. 58 above], p. 167), and Bar Hebraeus knew them to hold even earth and water to have souls (A.V.W. Jackson, 'The Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Manichaeism', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 45, 1925, pp. 246–268 [261]).

61 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* (n. 57 above), p. 396; transl. II, p. 788; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, ed. 'A.-K. 'Uthmān, Beirut, 1966, p. 184; al-Bīrūnī, al-*Āthār al-bāqiya 'an al-qurūn al-khāliya*, ed. and transl. C.E. Sachau, Leipzig, 1923, London, 1879, p. 207, 1–3.

such as stones to be endowed with reason. Since he is right about the former and about at least some of the latter, he may well be right about all of them.

That everything is rational, even inanimate things, is an obvious way of thinking if one believes that God is immanent in everything, mixed with His creation. But if the starting point of the Jahmiyya was the Yogācāra doctrine that nothing exists except for Mind, we would have to postulate that they had understood this doctrine in the light of the Iranian conception of the universe as a mixture of light and darkness. The idea of the divine pervading the world is not prominent in the Zoroastrian books, though Ohrmazd is seen as having disseminated fire in all his creation,[62] but the Manichaeans interpreted the mixture in what is called now a 'pan-psychist' (or 'animist') and now a 'pantheist' vein, and so too apparently did the Khurramīs: light was present in everything, and light was alive and sentient. The Jahmites seem to have envisaged Mind, the only real, self-existing entity of the Yogācāra, God in their parlance, along the same 'pantheist' lines, thereby endowing everything with reason. Yogācārin thought about Buddhahood could have played a role in it too. It certainly did in China, | 38
where Buddhists contemporary with Jahm developed doctrines according to which the entire universe is but the revelation of the absolute spirit, that everything, even dust grains and blades of grass, contained the Buddha nature, and that Buddhahood was present from the start of one's spiritual career, making sudden enlightenment possible.[63] Postulating that Jahm, not just the Jahmiyya, thought along those lines would have the advantage of explaining how he could hold it possible to know about a God who was far beyond conceptualization and utterly removed from any *wahm* of ours: it would be sudden enlightenment that he understood as faith created by God without the believer having anything to do with it.[64] It would also make intellectual (as opposed to purely sociological) sense of his conviction that faith had nothing to do with verbal profession or observance of the law.[65] In any case, the Jahmites who held God to be mixed with his creation also agreed with other Iranians when they

62 J. Duchesne-Guillemin, 'The Six Original Creations', in *Sir J.J. Zarthoshti Madressa Centenary Volume*, Bombay, 1967, pp. 7–8; *Greater Bundahishn*, ch. iii.8 in Zaehner, *Zurvan, a Zoroastrian Dilemma*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 322 (text), 334 (transl.).

63 K.K.S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, Princeton, 1964, pp. 306 ff.; more briefly Skilton, *Concise History* (n. 26 above), pp. 168–171.

64 Cf. Abū Yaʿlā, *Muʿtamad* (n. 52 above), p. 30, l. 6; transl. *TG*, v, p. 213.

65 Al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt* (n. 17 above), p. 279, l. 3, p. 477, l. 3; transl. *TG*, v, pp. 212–213; cf. Van Ess, *TG*, II, pp. 496–497.

thought of the end of the world as a separation: God would remain mixed with His creatures till He caused them all to perish, they said, then He would be released from them and they from Him. (What would happen to them is not stated.)[66]

It is the same Iranian (or Irano-Christian) pan-psychism that reappears among the Muʿtazilite Sufis in Iraq, in the negative evaluation characteristic of the Manichaeans and other Gnostics: light was captured, the world was the result of a cosmic fall, and salvation required asceticism. It is familiar from later Sufism, too, and it almost always goes with belief in reincarnation. To those who hold that God is immanent in the whole world, in animals and in trees, and indeed in the inanimate world, which they call His universal appearance, the wandering of the spirits through reincarnation (*ḥulūl al-arwāḥ bi'l-taraddud*) is not problematic, as al-Bīrūnī said with reference to Sufis well before Ibn ʿArabī and his pupils had formulated the theory which came to be known as *waḥdat al-wujūd* and which was to provide new shelter for adherents of such views.[67] If al-Jāḥiẓ is right that the Jahmiyya saw everything as endowed with intelligence, one would have expected them also to believe in reincarnation, as the Manichaeans, Khurramīs and *juhhāl al-ṣūfiyya* did, especially as it was also found in Buddhism. Maybe they did. Without al-Jāḥiẓ we would not have known that they were pan-psychists, and as it happens, his polemical target in the relevant passages does not include reincarnation, so he does not mention it at all. Unfortunately, no other source seems to mention or discuss reincarnation in connection with the Jahmites either.

39 In sum, Jahmism was not Neoplatonist. What the *jahālāt* relating to the non-existence of objects and the rationality of all things suggest is rather that it was Buddhist doctrine filtered through Iranian thought. To clinch the case would require unearthing of some intermediary links, such as Sanskrit terms or examples wandering via Bactrian or Sogdian into Arabic texts on the Jahmiyya, or local handling of Yogācārin views on Mind, emptiness or Buddhahood foreshadowing Jahmite views; but at this point I must hand over to the experts in the languages and the Buddhist history of Central Asia. The conclusion would be that just as the Christians of Iraq seem to have interpreted the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness in a Greek vein, so Frank seems to have

66 Al-Malaṭī, *Tanbīh* (n. 11 above), p. 76; transl. *TG* V, p. 220 (f), where the last part of the statement is taken to refer to what happens when people die rather than the future annihilation; cf. also Van Ess, *TG*, II, p. 506.

67 Al-Bīrūnī, *K. fī Taḥqīq mā lil-Hind*, ed. E. Sachau, London, 1887, p. 29; ed. Hyderabad, 1958, p. 44; transl. E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, 2 vols, London, 1910, I, pp. 57–58.

given us an *interpretatio graeca* of an Iranian doctrine of transcendence and immanence. But then the same would be true of the Iranians themselves: it clearly is not accidental that the Neoplatonist doctrine of the Universal Reason and the Universal Soul was to prove enormously popular among them.

CHAPTER 9

Buddhism as Ancient Iranian Paganism*

In his book on India Bīrūnī says that in ancient times the whole region from Khurasan through Fars, Iraq and Mosul to the border of Syria followed the religion of the Shamaniyya and continued to do so until Zoroaster appeared.[1] At first sight this makes no sense. The religion of the Shamaniyya (Sanskrit *śramaṇa*, Pali *samaṇa*, ascetics, monks) is Buddhism; the normal form of the word in Arabic is Sumaniyya, a vocalisation I shall freely use even though it must have arisen by mistake.[2] But how could Bīrūnī claim that the whole of the Iranian culture area had once been Buddhist? The answer is that well before his time Sumanism had come to be used as a general term for an ancient form of paganism of which Buddhism was seen as a survivor. In this light, some of Bīrūnī's information on the Sumaniyya is very interesting.

The idea of Buddhism as ancient paganism is presented in its clearest form in Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (wrote 359/961) and Khwārizmī (wrote between 367/977 and 372/982). We may start with Ḥamza. According to him, all the nations of the world had once followed a single religion, which had prevailed until the coming of the revealed laws (*ẓuhūr al-sharā'iʿ*). This single religion had been known by two names: in the eastern regions its adherents were called Sumaniyyūn (Buddhists) and in the western regions Kaldāniyyūn (Chaldaeans). Both still survived, the Sumanīs in India and China, the Chaldaeans in Harran and Edessa. In Khurasan the Sumanīs were now known as Shamanān, while the survivors of the Chaldaeans had taken to calling themselves Sabians since the time of Ma'mūn.[3]

Later Ḥamza provides some further details. Idolatry was instituted (*ḥuddithat*) in the | reign of king Ṭahmūrath, he says. It arose because some people

* This article has been greatly improved by the comments of Michael Cook and Kevin van Bladel on an earlier draft.

1 Bīrūnī, *Kitāb fī taḥqīq mā lil-Hind*, ed. E. Sachau, London 1887, 10 f.; ed. Hyderabad 1958 (the edition I have used), 15 f.; tr. E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, London 1910, i, 21 (henceforth cited in the form *Hind*, 10 f./15 = i, 21).

2 For all this, see G. Monnot, 'Sumaniyya', *EI*[2].

3 Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *Tawārīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'*, ed. J.M.P. Gottwaldt, Leipzig 1844, 5; ed. (with *Ta'rīkh* for *Tawārīkh*) Beirut 1961, 11 (henceforth cited in that order, separated by a slash); cf. D. Gimaret, 'Bouddha et les Bouddhistes dans la tradition musulmane', *Journal Asiatique* 257, 1969, 288 f.

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had lost their dear ones and made representations of them to console themselves, and eventually they came to worship them as intermediaries between man and God. It was also in the reign of Ṭahmūrath that fasting was instituted, originally because food was difficult to come by, but eventually it came to be seen as a form of religiosity and worship of God, and they practised it in an extreme form. The inventors of fasting (*al-mubtadiʿ lahu*) were poor people from among the followers of a man called Būdhāsaf. The followers of this religion were called Chaldaeans, and in the time of Islam they called themselves Sabians, though in reality the Sabians are a group of Christians living between the swamps and the desert who differ from the main body of Christians and who are counted among their heretics (*mubtadiʿīhim*). Ṭahmūrath, whose exploits included the building of Isfahan and Babel, held that every group which liked its own religion should be left alone, a principle followed in India to this day.[4]

Here there is no mention the Sumaniyya, only of the Chaldaeans, i.e. the pagans of Harran (and, in his first account, Edessa), who had adopted the name of Sabians to secure *dhimmī* status for themselves in the reign of Maʾmūn according to a famous story.[5] But the institutor of fasting among them is Būdhāsaf (Bodhisattva), placed in the reign of Ṭahmūrath, a king of the legendary Pīshdādid dynasty associated with eastern Iran who is here the ruler of Babel, too.[6] Both idolatry and fasting are said to have appeared in his reign for reasons that originally had nothing to do with religion. Būdhāsaf is the leader of a group whose poverty and fasting go well enough with Buddhism, but one would not have recognized him as a Buddhist figure if it had not been for his name.

Khwārizmī's account is similar and clearly shares a source with Ḥamza's first account, but he has some additional information. Once upon a time mankind (*al-nās*) were Sumaniyyūn and Kaldāniyyūn, he says. The former were idolaters and survive in India and China; the latter survive in Harran and Iraq (rather than Edessa) and are now called Sabians and Harranians, having adopted the name of Sabians in the time of Maʾmūn, though the real Sabians are a Christian sect. The Sumaniyya were followers of Suman and idolaters who believed in the eternity of the world (*qidam al-dahr*), the transmigration of souls, and

4 Ḥamza, *Tawārīkh*, 29–32/31 f. (both editions have Yūdāsaf for Būdhāsaf); cf. Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 280 f.

5 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. R. Tajaddud, Tehran 1971, 385; tr. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, New York 1970, ii, 751 f.

6 Cf. A. Christensen, 'Les types du premier homme et du premier roi', *Archives d'Études Orientales* 14, 1917–1934, part i, 183 ff.; E. Yarshater, 'Iranian National History', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, 3 (1), ed. E. Yarshater, Cambridge 1983, 371.

the doctrine that the earth is always falling downwards. Their prophet was Būdhāsaf, who came forth in India, though others say that he was Hermes. Būdhāsaf appeared in the time of king Ṭahmūrath, who brought the Persian script.[7]

Here Būdhāsaf is more recognizable: he appears in India, his followers are the Sumaniyya, and both he and the Sumaniyya are idolaters who believe in the transmigration of souls, the eternity of the world, and a somewhat
27 enigmatic doctrine regarding the downward | movement of the earth; as before, they survive in India and China. For all that, Būdhāsaf is still associated with the Iranian king Ṭahmūrath, and it is not just to the Sumaniyya that he is a prophet, but also to the Chaldaeans/Sabians, in competition with Hermes, the prophet with whom the Sabians are normally associated.[8] There is no mention of fasting.

A similar account of the origins of paganism was known already to Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204/819). According to him, the religion practised under Ṭahmūrath was idolatry, and fasting first appeared in his time, originally because some poor people had trouble procuring food but eventually as a way of drawing close to God, in which capacity it continued until it was instituted by the revealed laws.[9] Unlike Ḥamza, Ibn al-Kalbī does not identify the poor people as followers of Būdhāsaf, but Būdhāsaf's presence should probably be taken for granted, for it is otherwise hard to see why the invention of fasting should be placed under Ṭahmūrath. Besides, other traditions which may also go back to Ibn al-Kalbī identify Būdhāsaf as the inventor of Sabianism.[10] Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (d. 247/861 or later) and Ṭabarī duly tell us that Zoroaster's patron, Bīshtāsf (Vishtāspa) was a Sabian, i.e. a pagan, when Zoroaster brought Zoroastrianism to him.[11]

Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) also knew the history of paganism. Unlike Ḥamza and Khwārizmī, he does not tell us that mankind had once followed the same

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7 Khwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm*, ed. G. van Vloten, Leiden 1895, 36; cf. C.E. Bosworth, 'Al-Khwārizmī on Various Faiths and Sects, Chiefly Iranian', *Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, Leiden 1990, 12, 14 f.

8 Cf. K. van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, Oxford 2009, ch. 3.

9 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ʾl-taʾrīkh*, ed. C.J. Tornberg, Dār Ṣādir reprint, Beirut 1965–1967, i, 61.

10 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje and others, Leiden 1879–1901, i, 176, 184; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, i, 61.

11 Abū ʿĪsā cited in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's *Kitāb al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. W. Madelung, Tehran and Berlin 2012, 640 (my thanks to Prof. Madelung and Sabine Schmidtke for letting me see the typescript); Ṭabarī, i, 683.

pagan religion, but rather gives his information in connection with specific peoples. In the first of three relevant accounts he says that the Iranians were pagans (*ʿalā raʾy al-ḥunafāʾ*) when Zoroaster brought his book[12] and explains their paganism as Sabianism, brought by Būdhāsaf to Ṭahmūrath.[13] Būdhāsaf's message was that perfection, nobility, complete soundness and the sources of life lay in the elevated roof above, i.e. the sky, and that the planets which came out and went in were the managers (of this world) and the cause of everything in the world, including the creation of composites out of simple elements, the perfection of forms (*tatmīm al-ṣuwar*), the lengths of lives, and more besides. He attracted people of weak minds with this view and was the first to preach the Sabian doctrine of the Harranians and Kīmārīs, the latter being followers of a type of Sabianism which was separate from that of the Harranians and found among people in the swamps around Wasit and Basra; Masʿūdī also refers to them as the pagans and Chaldaeans (*al-ḥunafāʾ wa'l-kaldāniyyīn*) who were the Babylonians still extant in the swamps.[14]

The paganism that Būdhāsaf brought to Ṭahmūrath is here Sabianism in the sense of | Harranian religion, without any Buddhist features whatever. 28
As the bearer of Sabian/Chaldaean religion Būdhāsaf was to undergo further developments: an astrologer by the name of al-Qasrī, cited by Maqdisī (wrote 355/966), held him to be a Babylonian of immense antiquity who possessed the science of the astral revolutions and who had calculated the age of the world as 360,000 years; he lived before Hermes, who lived long before Adam.[15] Since the present paper is about Buddhism, however, these developments can be left aside.[16]

In his second account Masʿūdī tells us that many Indians, Chinese and others hold that God and the angels have bodies. For this reason they made images of them and worshipped them until their wise men informed them that the planets and stars were live and endowed with intelligence (*nāṭiqa*), that the angels moved back and forth between them and God, and that everything in

12 Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden 1894, 90 f.

13 Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 90 f.; *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. C. Barbier de Meynard and A.J.B. Pavet de Courteille, Paris 1861–1877 (cited by volume and page); ed. C. Pellat, Beirut 1966–1979 (cited by volume and paragraph), ii, 111 f./i, § 535; cf. iv, 49/ii, § 1375, where Būdhāsaf is credited with a statement about kingship which was recorded in Persian on the gate of Nawbahār.

14 Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, ii, 112/i, § 535; cf. iv, 68/ii, § 1397; idem, *Tanbīh*, 161.8.

15 Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-Badʾ wa'l-taʾrīkh*, ed. Cl. Huart, Paris 1899–1919, ii, 97; cf. ii, 146 ff. on his book on *qirānāt*.

16 Cf. van Bladel, *Arabic Hermes*, 115–118.

the world was due to them, so they worshipped them instead; but during the day and some nights they could not see them, so they made idols again. After various events which Masʿūdī says he omits, they abandoned the worship of the heavenly bodies until Būdhāsaf appeared in India. He was an Indian who went to Sind, Sistan, Zābulistān and Kirmān, claiming to be a prophet and a messenger of God, and an intermediary between God and his creation. He came to the land of the Persians in the time of Ṭahmūrath, or, according to some, in that of Jam(shīd) (Ṭahmūrath's brother and successor), and he was the first to make public the doctrines of Sabianism (here Masʿūdī refers the reader back to his earlier account). Būdhāsaf taught them asceticism and preoccupation with the things of the higher worlds in which people's souls originated and to which they would return, and he renewed (*jaddada*) the worship of idols.[17]

Here Sabianism is not primordial paganism, but rather a reformed version of it: idolatry represents the first step, and here as in Ḥamza it develops naturally, though it is also reinstituted by Būdhāsaf. The latter's Sabianism, consisting of astral worship and asceticism, is the second step, and astral worship also develops naturally, though again it is reinstituted by Būdhāsaf. How asceticism (fasting) had appeared we are not told, but in Ibn al-Kalbī and Ḥamza that too develops naturally, and Masʿūdī is clearly working with closely related material. He does not use the word Sumaniyya, but his Būdhāsaf is an Indian figure of whom we are implicitly told that his religion had once prevailed in eastern Iran.

In his third account Masʿūdī says that all of China used to adhere to the religion of their forebears (*man salafa*), that is, the religion of the Sumaniyya (or Samaniyya, as Pellat vocalises it). He identifies Sumanism as idolatry comparable to that of Quraysh, implicitly referring back to his second account. One manuscript has the Chinese import their Sumanism from India, but in Pellat's edition the Sumaniyya are simply idolaters like the Indians. We do not see Būdhāsaf reform their gross idolatry here. Instead we are told that Dualist and Dahrī doctrines have appeared in China: the reference is presumably to Manichaeism
29 and |(real) Buddhism.[18]

The information about Būdhāsaf which does not reflect Iraqi paganism in the sources reviewed so far is this: Būdhāsaf was an Indian active in diverse parts of eastern Iran, a prophet, and a contemporary of king Ṭahmūrath; he

17 Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 42 ff./ii, § 1370 f.; cf. Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, Istanbul 1928, 321. The section down to the appearance of Būdhāsaf is from al-Nawbakhtī, citing Abū Maʿshar (cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, v, ed. M.M. al-Khuḍayrī, Cairo 1958, 155).

18 Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, i, 298 f./i, § 325; cf. Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 290 (where the Chinese get their Buddhism from India), 294–296 (on Buddhists as Dahrīs).

founded or reformed ancient paganism, meaning idolatry, and his followers were poor people for whom he instituted fasting or who did so themselves; they were known as Sumanīs and were still found in India and China, and they believed that the world was eternal, that the souls transmigrated, and that the earth was always falling downwards.

Some of these details were also known to the heresiographers, who added a few of their own. To them, the Sumaniyya were a species of Dahrīs. Māturīdī (d. 333/944) explained that they (or the Dahrīs in general) held everything to be generated by mixtures and movements devoid of providence and wisdom, and that they only accepted knowledge based on the senses, so that they would not accept information about countries that they had not seen, for example.[19] They were *muʿaṭṭila*, as Maqdisī said, placing them in India and giving a well-informed account of their belief in reincarnation with reference to that country;[20] but he also identifies them as dualists with implicit reference to Khurasan,[21] and cites the Samanid geographer Jayhānī as saying that some Sumanīs regarded the Buddha (*al-budd*) as a prophet while others cast him as the creator in visible form.[22] According to Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), they had existed before the rise of Islam and reappeared after it; they believed in the eternity of the world, knowledge based on the five senses alone, and the equipollence of proofs (*takāfuʾ al-adilla*), as well as in reincarnation on the basis of merit (which he took to be incompatible with their epistemological principles).[23] Their view that the earth is always falling was familiar to Māturīdī, but Baghdādī reports it as Dahrī rather than specifically Sumanī.[24] The heresiographers say nothing about the Sumaniyya's relationship with Būdhāsaf, though Baghdādī knew him as a pseudo-prophet.[25]

With the exception of Maqdisī's account relating to India, all the information on Buddhism reviewed so far had reached the Muslims via eastern Iran. It must have been in eastern Iran that Būdhāsaf was linked with Ṭahmūrath. It was certainly there that the terms *shamanān* and Būdhāsaf were formed[26] and that

19 Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. F. Kholeif, Beirut 1970, 152; similarly Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Kitāb al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. M. McDermott and W. Madelung, London 1991, 29.ult., 44 f.

20 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, i, 144, 197 ff.; iv, 9; cf. Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 298 f.

21 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, iv, 24; similarly Ibn al-Murtaḍā in Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 294.

22 Maqdisī, *Bad'*, iv, 19.

23 Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna 'l-firaq*, ed. M. Badr, Cairo 1910, 253 f.; idem, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 320.

24 Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, 319 f.

25 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 333.

26 Cf. W. Sundermann, 'Die Bedeutung des Parthischen für die Verbreitung buddhistischer Wörter indischer Herkunft', *Altorientalische Forschungen* 9, 1982, 100 ff.; N. Sims-Williams,

the book which came to be known in Arabic as *Kitāb al-Bilawhar wa-Būdhāsaf*
30 originated.[27] It was also there that Jahm b. Ṣafwān |(d. 128/746) disputed with Sumaniyya,[28] probably at Tirmidh, on the border between Sogdia and Bactria (Ṭukhāristān), where he was based and where there certainly was a Buddhist population.[29] It must have been via debates such as Jahm's that the Sumanīs came to be known as empiricists and skeptics, and that their doctrine regarding the downwards movement of the earth reached Iraq, where it was known already to Naẓẓām (d. 220–230/835–45): the latter had frequented Sumanīs and other believers in the equipollence of proofs in Baghdādī's opinion.[30] A story set in Basra in the 740s–760s presumes Sumanism to have been sufficiently well known at the time for a Basran to be attracted to it.[31] Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990) had actually read about Būdhāsaf in a Khurasani book and knew him to be the prophet of the Sumaniyya, a religion followed by most Transoxanians before Islam and in ancient times (*qabla 'l-islām wa-fī 'l-qadīm*); but all he says about it is that Būdhāsaf forbade his followers to say no, which sounds like an innuendo.[32] He also reports that some held *al-budd* to be an image of Būdhāsaf *al-ḥakīm*, and both he and others have further information about the devotees of *al-budd*.[33] But *al-budd* is not often linked, let alone identified, with Būdhāsaf before Bīrūnī.[34]

'Indian Elements in Parthian and Sogdian', in K. Röhrborn and W. Veenker (eds.), *Sprachen des Buddhismus in Zentralasien*, Wiesbaden 1983, 133, 137.

27 Cf. D.M. Lang, 'Bilawhar wa-Yūdāsaf', *EI*[2]; Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 282 ff.

28 J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, Berlin and New York 1991–1997, ii, 503 f.

29 P. Leriche and S. Pidaev, 'Termez in Antiquity', in J. Cribb and G. Hermann (eds.), *After Alexander: Central Asia before Islam*, Oxford 2007, 189 f.; Hsüan-tsang (d. 664) in S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, i, London 1906, 39.

30 Māturīdī, *Tawḥīd*, 152, cf. 155; Baghdādī, *Farq*, 113; Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 293, 295 f.

31 Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, Cairo 1927–1974, iii, 146 f. (in a story bringing together *mutakallim*s of all persuasions represented in Basra at the time).

32 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 408; tr. Dodge, ii, 824; cf. P. Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism*, Cambridge 2012, cf. 17 ('wife-sharing').

33 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 411.5; tr. Dodge, ii, 831; Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 274 ff.

34 Cf. Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 274 ff. Ibn al-Nadīm lists Persian books on al-Budd, Būdhāsaf, and Būdhāsaf and Bilawhar (*Fihrist*, 364.-2; tr. Dodge, ii, 714), suggesting that they entered the Persian tradition as separate figures.

From Iranian Buddhism to Būdhāsaf the Sabian

How did Būdhāsaf come to be the institutor of ancient paganism? Given the scarcity of the material, the answer has to be conjectural, but we may start by noting that Buddhism and Iranian paganism had blended in eastern Iran to the point that they will have looked much the same to a Zoroastrian. Thus the Sogdians, who were often Buddhists outside Sogdia (where their Buddhist writings have been found), do not seem often to have been Buddhists at home, but even so, they were quite ready to incorporate the Buddha in their eclectic pantheon. A house built around 700 at Panjikant, where both Iranian and other deities (above all the Babylonian goddess Nana) were worshipped, had a reception room with huge images of the owner's main deities as well as smaller figures of other gods and goddesses, including a modest Buddha equipped with the halo and tongues of flames characteristic of the local deities: the owner seems to have been a non-Buddhist who had | added the Buddha to his 31
religious repertoire, clearly thinking of him as a deity.[35] A terracotta Buddha figure dating from the fifth/early sixth century or later has also been found at Panjikant, made by a local artist who may have seen images of the Maitreya Buddha, but who did not follow any Buddhist prototype. The mould was made for serial production, so there were many Sogdians who liked to call upon the Buddha even though they were not what one could call Buddhists.[36] Buddhist objects owned by non-Buddhists have also been found in Samarqand, Kish and Nasaf.[37] The Buddhists in their turn absorbed (or, as converts, retained) Iranian concepts such as dualism,[38] spoke of *Buddha Mazda*, depicted the Buddha with the above-mentioned tongues of flames, which are assumed to reflect Iranian tradition,[39] and sometimes cast him as the creator in visible form, suggesting *ḥulūlī* views of the type also espoused by Muqannaʿ.[40] Above all, both the Buddhists and the Sogdians revered the *dēv*s as divine beings instead

35 B.I. Marshak and V.I. Raspopova, 'Wall Paintings from a House with a Granary, Panjikent, 1st Quarter of the Eighth Century AD', *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 1, 1990, 123–176, esp. 151 ff.

36 B.I. Marshak and V.I. Raspopova, 'Buddha Icon from Panjikent', *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 5, 1997–1998, 300.

37 K. Abdullaev, *Buddhist Iconography of Northern Bactria*, Sydney and New Delhi, 2015.

38 Cf. above, note 21.

39 B. Stavisky, 'Buddha-Mazda from Kara-tepe in Old Termez (Uzbekistan): a Preliminary Communication', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 3, 1980, 89–94; D.A. Scott, 'The Iranian Face of Buddhism', *East and West* 40, 1990, 54.

40 Cf. above, note 22.

of branding them as demons after the fashion of the Zoroastrians. At Panjikant the inhabitants used Zoroastrian fire ritual and burial modes, but whereas the Zoroastrian creed included profession of hatred for the *dēv*s,[41] the last king of Panjikant was called Dēvaštīč, "*dēv*-like", or in other words "divine";[42] the scribe of a letter probably addressed to him was called *dywgwn*, rendered "the devilish" by the translators, though it is hard to see why the *dyw* in his name should be more devilish than that in *dyw'štyc*;[43] and a Sogdian Dēvdād, son of Dēvdasht (alias Abū 'l-Sāj b. Yūsuf), turns up in Afshīn's troops along with his nephew Dēvdād b. Muḥammad.[44] Modern scholars debate whether the *dēv*s revered by Dēvaštīč and his likes were survivors of ancient Iranian religion or Indian imports bought by Buddhism.[45] To the Zoroastrians, it will have been a non-question: the two religions were one and the same.

It was presumably the Buddhists of eastern Iran who had linked Būdhāsaf with the Pīshdādid dynasty in order to endow their religion with native credentials, but from a Zoroastrian point of view, they thereby identified him as the founder of the *dēv*-worshipping paganism that Zoroaster was to oppose. At some point the Pīshdādid and Kayānid kings travelled to Iraq, where they replaced the Achaemenids as rulers of ancient Iran and Babel in the historical
32 memory of the Iranians. Here Būdhāsaf entered a discussion of the origins | of idolatry which had begun well before the rise of the Sasanians, let alone the coming of Islam. The best known founder of idolatry in Babel was Nimrod, a wicked king. Contrary to what one might have expected, Būdhāsaf was not simply identified with him, however, perhaps because he was not a king himself or perhaps because Nimrod was already associated or identified with Bēwarāsb, an evil king of the Pīshdādid dynasty who ruled after Ṭahmurath and Jam(shīd) and who was also known as Azdahāg.[46] Būdhāsaf was however confused with Bēwarāsb. In the *Dēnkard* the wicked (Az)dahāg, i.e. Bēwarāsb, is a pre-Zoroastrian king of Babel who bewitched mankind into following the

41 Yasna 12.1; also prefaced to some Yashts, e.g. nos. 5, 19.

42 W.B. Henning, 'A Sogdian God', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 28, 1965, 253; cf. F. Grenet and E. de la Vaissière, 'The Last Days of Panjikent', *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 8, 2002, 155–196.

43 Grenet and de la Vaissière, 'Last Days of Panjikent', 172, 175.

44 C.E. Bosworth, 'Sāḏjids', *EI*[2].

45 C. Herrenschmidt and J. Kellens, 'daiva', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

46 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, i, 174, 201 ff.; P.O. Skjaervø, 'Zarathustra in the Avesta and in Manicheism. Irano-Manichaica IV', in *La Persia e l'Asia centrale. Da Alessandro al X secolo* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Atti dei Convegni 127), Rome 1996, 608 f.; cf. also Movsēs Xorenac'i cited there and at 609n.

idolatry which Zoroaster opposed.[47] In the traditions perhaps going back to Ibn al-Kalbī, the institutor of Sabianism is actually called Bēwarāsb;[48] but he appears in the reign of Ṭahmūrath and is not a king himself, so he retains the key characteristics of Būdhāsaf.[49] (Bēwarāsb also figures as a *ḥakīm*, i.e. Būdhāsaf, in the fourth/tenth-century *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'*).[50] As the institutor of Chaldaean/Sabian idolatry, however, Būdhāsaf is undoubtedly continuing an old Iraqi debate about the origins of idolatry in which the protagonist used to be Nimrod and/or Bēwarāsb, even when he retains his Buddhist name.

Bīrūnī

We may now turn to Bīrūnī. A great deal of what he says comes from the sources already examined. In his section on pseudo-prophets (*al-mutanabbi'ūn*) in his *Āthār*, written in 390 f./999 f., he mentions that Būdhāsaf appeared in India one year into the reign of Ṭahmūrath, brought the Persian script, and preached the religion of the Sabians (*millat al-ṣābi'a*); many followed him; the Pīshdādid kings and some of the Kayānids, who were settled at Balkh, venerated the sun, moon, planets and the elements until the coming of Zoroaster, and there were still survivors of such Sabians in Harran, where they are known as the Ḥarrāniyya.[51] All this is what we have read in Ḥamza, Khwārizmī, and Masʿūdī, except that here it is Būdhāsaf, not Ṭahmūrath, who brings the Persian script. A little earlier in his *Āthār*, Bīrūnī tells us that before the coming of the revealed laws (*ẓuhūr al-sharā'iʿ*) and the appearance of Būdhāsaf, people (*al-nās*) were Shamaniyyūn in the east. They were idolaters and survive today in India, China and among the Toghuz Oghuz; the | Khurasanis call them Shamanān.[52] "It 33
is even said that before the despatch of the messengers all mankind (*al-nās*)

47 *Dēnkard*, VII.4, 72 (tr. W.E. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, Oxford 1897, 66 f.); cf. Skjaervø, 'Zarathustra', 611.

48 See above, note 10.

49 Differently F. Rosenthal (tr.), *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, i, Albany 1989, 345n, against Christensen, 'Types', i, 206, but without discussion.

50 *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'*, Beirut 1957, ii, 204.11, 205.12 (here written Bīrāst, but compare the Urdu translation as rendered in J. Wall, *The Ikhwan-us-suffa*, Lucknow 1880, 8, 9).

51 Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiya ʿan al-qurūn al-khāliya*, ed. and tr. C.E. Sachau, Leipzig 1923 and London 1879, 204.18. (I do not give separate reference to the translation since it preserves the pagination of the Arabic text in the margin.)

52 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 206.16.

formed a single nation of idolaters", he adds in his *Hind*.[53] With the exception of the Toghuz Oghuz, this is what we are told in Khwārizmī.

Bīrūnī continues in his *Āthār* that the idol temples (*bahārāt aṣnāmihim*), monasteries (*farkhārāt*)[54] and other remains (*āthār*) of the Sumaniyya are extant in the borderland between Khurasan and India, where he had presumably seen them himself. The Sumaniyya believed in the eternity of the world (*qidam al-dahr*), reincarnation of the soul, and that the celestial sphere (*al-falak*) is endlessly falling in the void (*khalā'*) and that this is why its motion is circular: they claimed that when a round object is moved (*uzīla*), it will rotate as it descends.[55] This is an amplified version of what we read in Khwārizmī, suggesting that he and Khwārizmī were excerpting from the same source. He adds that some of them believe that the world has been created in time and that it will last a million years, divided into four eras, of which the first is 400,000 years long and a period of happiness; the second is 300,000 long and less good, the third is 200,000 long and still less good, and the fourth will last 100,000 years and is a time of evil and corruption, and that is the time we live in.[56] What he is describing is the four *yuga*s which make up a *kalpa* in the Vedic literature and which also went into Buddhism; but the scheme seems to be greatly simplified, and depending on precisely what he has in mind, the figures are either strikingly low or too high.[57] Bīrūnī observes that some Shamaniyya believe Adam to be the father of mankind while others hold different groups to have different ancestors, for reasons he finds silly. The Shamaniyya and the Indians have historical information about the first Buddha and the one after him, and how to reach the status of *bodhisattva* (*būdhāsafiyya*) and Buddha (*buddiyya*), through which we escape birth and death, that is, reincarnation.[58] All this is recognizably about real Buddhism and could come from the same source that Khwārizmī was using, perhaps Īrānshahrī.

Bīrūnī knows more about the subject in his book on India. The Shamaniyya are closer to the Indians/Hindus than any others, though they detest the Brah-

53 *Hind*, 53 f./84 f. = i, 112.

54 *Farkhār* is a Sogdian rendering of *vihāra* (pointed out to me by K. van Bladel and also noted in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 'Buddhism').

55 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 206.18.

56 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 206.20–22, with the continuation in J. Fück, 'Sechs Ergänzungen zu Sachaus Ausgabe von al-Bīrūnī's "Chronologie Orientalischer Völker"', in his *Documenta Islamica Inedita*, Berlin 1952, 74.

57 Cf. W.M. McGovern, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy*, London 2000 (first publ. 1923), 45 ff.; A. Sadakata and H. Nakamura, *Buddhist Cosmology*, Tokyo 1997, ch. 4, esp. 106.

58 Bīrūnī in Fück, 'Sechs Ergänzungen', 74.

mans, he says.[59] The book of *Gūrāman* (Sachau tentatively suggests *Gūḍhāmana*), meaning knowledge of the unknown (*ʿilm al-ghayb*), was a book about augury composed by the Buddha, the founder of the Sumanī wearers of red robes (*al-budd ṣāḥib al-muḥammira al-shamaniyya*).[60] Bīrūnī also mentions a book of *Jin*, i.e. Jina (victorious), identifying *Jin* as the Buddha, and cites | the 34
book as denying that Mount Meru is round.[61] Nonetheless, he elsewhere says that he has not found a single Buddhist (Shamanī) book on the topic of Mount Meru or met a Buddhist who could explain their views on this subject, so he cites the further details from Īrānshahrī.[62] Maybe Jina here is the founder of Jainism, his identification as the Buddha notwithstanding. Bīrūnī also cites the *Bṛht Saṃhita* of the astronomer Varāhamihira (d. 589), which is still extant, but which is not a Buddhist book, on how to construct idols: Jina, that is, the Buddha, should be depicted as extremely beautiful, with the lines of his palms and feet like a lotus, seated on a lotus, with a placid expression, and with soft (? *hashshāsh*) hair as if he were the father of creation.[63] The *arhant* was another form of the Buddha's body (but again it seems to be a Jain figure):[64] in that role he should be depicted as a handsome naked youth with hands reaching to his knees and his wife Śri under his left breast.[65] (Vishnu, of whom the Buddha was the ninth incarnation according to the Hindus, was also to be depicted with Śri under his left breast.)[66] The Shamaniyya looked after the idol of the Buddha, while the class known as Nagna looked after that of Arhant, he says, apparently on the authority of the same book.[67] (It also mentioned that the idol of the Maga in India was the sun.)[68] He knew of a book by a Buddhist astronomer called Sugrīm (Sugrīva according to Sachau) al-Shamanī;[69] and he had heard that when the Buddhūdan (Buddha?) addressed his adherents (*qawmihi*), the Shamaniyya, he called the three powers latent in matter *buddha*, *dharma* and

59 *Hind*, 10/15 = i, 21.

60 *Hind*, 75/122 = i, 158.

61 *Hind*, 121/201.1 = i, 243.

62 *Hind*, 124/206 = i, 249. He is not denying having seen any Buddhist book or met any Buddhist in general, as Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 294, takes it.

63 *Hind*, 57/91 = i, 119.

64 Thus M. Tardieu, 'La diffusion du bouddhisme dans l'empire kouchan, l'Iran et la Chine, d'après un kephalaion manichéen inédit', *Studia Iranica* 17, 1988, 173n.

65 *Hind*, 57/91 = i, 119.

66 *Hind*, 56/89 f. = i, 118.

67 *Hind*, 59/93 = i, 121.

68 Bīrūnī, *Hind*, 58/93 = i, 121. He also mentions them at 11/16 = i, 21.

69 *Hind*, 74/120.-2 = i, 156.

sangha, meaning intelligence, religion and ignorance (*sic*).[70] Finally, we are told that the Shamaniyya cast their dead into the river, following an injunction of the Buddha, an odd piece of information, though this mode of disposing of the dead is in fact reported for Tibet.[71]

As Gimaret observes, Bīrūnī did not know much about Buddhism. It was clearly from Hindus that he derived most of his information about it, and what he describes is largely of doctrines that it shared with Hinduism. This is also true of Īrānshahrī's and Maqdisī's information, and it may reflect the state of Buddhism in India at the time.[72]

35

The History of Sumanism

If Bīrūnī did not know much about Buddhism, he knew more than most about Iranian paganism, and it is to his statements on this subject that we may now turn. In the passage with which this article began he says that the whole region from Khurasan through Fars, Iraq and Mosul to the border of Syria had once practised the religion of the Shamaniyya. This continued to be the case until Zoroaster appeared in Azerbaijan and preached in Balkh, where Gushtāsb and his son Isfandiyār adopted Zoroastrianism (*Majūsiyya*) and spread it by force and by treaty (*qahran wa-ṣulḥan*) in east and west alike (*fī bilād al-mashriq wa'l-maghrib*), setting up fire temples all the way from China to the Byzantine empire (*wa-naṣaba buyūt al-nīrān min al-Ṣīn ilā 'l-Rūm*). The later kings of Fars and Iraq, presumably meaning the Sasanians, also chose it as their religion, so the Shamaniyya withdrew to Balkh.[73] What Bīrūnī is saying here is not that the entire region from Khurasan to the Byzantine empire had once been Buddhist, but rather that it had once adhered to the same sort of paganism: it is only when the religion withdraws to Balkh that we have to understand it as Buddhism. One would assume Bīrūnī's statement to be indebted to Ḥamza and Khwārizmī on the aboriginal religion of mankind, called Sumanī in the east and Chaldaean/Sabian in the west. He quotes it in his *Āthār*, as seen already.[74] But he is not simply reproducing it here, using the eastern rather than the western term for the aboriginal religion, for what he is saying is not that all

70 *Hind*, 20/30 = i, 40 ("Buddhodana [*sic*]", with another *sic* after "ignorance").

71 *Hind*, 284/479 = ii, 169 (it also puzzled Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 293); cf. D.J. Davies and L.H. Mates, *Encyclopedia of Cremation*, Aldershot 2005, 97.

72 Gimaret, 'Bouddha', 295, 299, 307.

73 *Hind*, 10 f./15 f. = i, 21.

74 Above, note 52.

mankind had once adhered to the Shamanī religion, but rather that people had once done so in regions which add up to the former Sasanian empire. Unlike Ḥamza and Khwārizmī, moreover, he is making this point in connection with the history of Zoroastrianism, and what he tells us is that the original religion of the Iranians was forcibly suppressed by Zoroastrian rulers. He envisages these rulers as using compulsion in ways that included *jihād*: the new religion was imposed by force and by *treaty*. In short, Gushtāsb and his son Isfandiyār are here depicted as behaving much as the Safavids were to do some six centuries after Bīrūnī wrote, suppressing one religion current in Iran in favour of another and waging war in its name against their neighbours.

What lies behind this idea? Bīrūnī is not our only source for it. According to Masʿūdī, Vishtāspa/Gushtāsb made Zoroastrianism victorious by military force (*qātala ʿalayhā ḥattā ẓaharat*).[75] Thaʿālibī says that he forced people to adopt Zoroastrianism, slaughtering large numbers of his own subjects in that connection.[76] The third/ninth-century Zoroastrian Martan Farrukh informs us that his son and brother, Spendād and Zarēr, propagated the new religion all the way to the Byzantine empire and India together with other warriors.[77] But it is usually only against the Huns/Turks ("Turan") that Vishtāspa and his son fight in the Zoroastrian books and Muslim sources reflecting the Sasanian tradition,[78] and the idea of Vishtāspa/Hystaspes imposing the new religion by force seems to be unknown to | the Greek tradition, reflecting the Hellenistic 36
and the Parthian periods. This suggests that the image of the first Zoroastrian kings as religious tyrants was formed in the Sasanian period, reflecting Sasanian policies.

The Sasanian use of force on behalf of Zoroastrianism is known from numerous literary sources, mostly Christian, but also the ultimately Zoroastrian *Letter of Tansar* and, in a more legendary vein, the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšēr ī Pābagān*.[79] They say nothing about Sasanian *jihād* or measures against Buddhism. Both activities are mentioned in the famous inscriptions of the third-century priest, Kirdīr, however. Kirdīr boasts of having set up fires and priests throughout the

75 Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 90.14.

76 Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar akhbār mulūk al-furs wa-siyarihim*, ed. and tr. H. Zotenberg, Paris 1900, 257.

77 P.J. de Menasce (ed. and tr.), *Škand Gūmānīk Vičār*, Fribourg en Suisse 1945, x, 65–68.

78 Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, i, 676 f.; Yarshater, 'Iranian National History', 376; A. Shapur Shabazi, 'Goštāsp', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

79 Cf. A. de Jong, 'One Nation under God? The Early Sasanians as Guardians and Destroyers of Holy Sites', in R.G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann (eds.), *Götterbilder, Gottesbilder, Weltbilder*, i, Tübingen 2006, 233 ff.

empire, inflicting heavy blows on Buddhists (*shaman*), Hindus (*brāman*), Jews, Nazarenes, Christians, *maktak* (unidentified), and Manichaeans (*zandīk*), routing Ahriman and the demons (*dēvān*), and setting up fires and priests in the land of the non-Iranians, too, "where the horses and men of the king of kings reached".[80] The provinces affected by these measures, whether in the form of internal repression or external *jihād*, stretch from Syria, Cilicia, Cappadocia and Pontus in the west to "the Kushan country up to Peshawar" in the east: not quite Syria to China, as Bīrūnī says, but certainly Rūm to India, as Martan Farrukh puts it.[81] And here as in Bīrūnī, it is by the establishment of fire temples that Zoroastrianism is imposed. In line with this, archaeologists generally credit the decline of the Buddhist monasteries at Tirmidh to the Sasanian conquest of the region in the later third or fourth century;[82] and a shrine at one of these monasteries (Karatepe) seems hastily to have been converted into a Zoroastrian fire altar when Tirmidh was occupied by Sasanian troops, who left behind Persian graffiti.[83] These activities were hardly forgotten. Yet we do not hear anything about Sasanian kings waging *jihād* on behalf of Zoroastrianism in the standard accounts of the Sasanian kings. What we do hear is that the Pīshdādid kings engaged in it, thereby eliminating the Shamanī religion from an area corresponding to the Sasanian empire. In short, it seems that
37 the Pīshdādids have been | reshaped in the image of the later kings: the Sasanian assault on Buddhism was remembered as war against the Sumaniyya by

80 D.N. Mackenzie (ed. and tr.), 'Kerdir's Inscription', in G. Herrmann, *The Sasanian Rock Reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam* (*Iranische Denkmäler: Iranische Felsreliefs I*), Berlin 1989, 35 ff.; synoptic translation of the Naqsh-i Rustam, Sar Mashhad and Ka'ba of Zoroaster inscriptions by Ph. Gignoux, *Les quatres inscriptions du mage Kirdīr*, Paris 1991, 66 ff.

81 MacKenzie, 'Kerdir's Inscription', §§ 14 f. The Kushan country has disappeared in Gignoux, *Quatres inscriptions*, 71, but "to Peshawar" remains. For the religious groups mentioned, see F. de Blois, 'Naṣrānī (*Nazōraios*) and Ḥanīf (*Ethnikos*): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and Islam', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65, 2002, 5 ff.

82 P. Leriche, 'Termez antique et médiévale', in P. Leriche and others (eds.), *La Bactriane au carrefour des routes et des civilisations de l'Asie Centrale: Termez et les villes de Bactriane-Tokharestan* (actes du colloque de Termez 1997), Paris 2001, 80; B. Stavisky, 'Le Bouddhisme à Taramita-Termez au II^e^-V^e^ siècles', in the same work, 61.

83 B. Stavisky, *La Bactriane sous le Kushans*, Paris 1986, 198; idem, 'Le problème des liens entre le bouddhisme bactrien, le zoroastrianisme et les cultres mazdéens locaux à la lumière des fouilles de Kara-tepe', in F. Grenet (ed.), *Cultes et monuments religieux dans l'Asie Centrale pré-Islamique*, Paris 1987, 51; cf. also the helpful discussion in M.G. Raschke, 'New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East', in H. Temporini and W. Haase (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Berlin and New York 1975–1991, II (Principat), IX/2, 808, 1058.

Gushtāsb and his son. Compare Yarshater, 'Iranian National History', 402 f., on the reshaping of the legendary kings along Sasanian lines.

It is not clear whether Kirdīr refers to the suppression of Iranian paganism: his measures against Ahriman and the demons (*dēvān*) could be understood in that vein, but they could also be read as mere recapitulation of his activities against the foreign faiths. Either way, it is hard to believe that he and/or his successors can have imposed what they took to be Zoroastrianism on Iran without using force against Iranian priests as well, for the diversity within the Iranian religious tradition must have been enormous, given that the priests in question had never been united in one organisation or subordinated to a single authority before. There are signs of diversity even in the Pahlavi books, though all they preserve is a single priestly tradition.[84] When Thaʿālibī describes Gushtāsb as slaughtering large numbers of his own subjects, one would once more assume the behaviour to be that of the Sasanians.

Bīrūnī has something interesting to say about the result as well. In his *Āthār* he tells us that the ancient Magians (*al-majūs al-aqdamūn*) were those who existed before Zoroaster; they no longer existed in the pure form: all of them were now of Zoroaster's people, or of the Shamaniyya, but they added some ancient things to their religion which they had taken from the laws of the Shamaniyya and the ancient Harranians.[85] By *majūs* Bīrūnī is not likely to mean priests (Magi), a sense the word never seems to carry in Arabic, but since his *majūs* predate Zoroaster, he obviously is not using the word in its normal sense of Zoroastrians either. He must mean something like adherents of Iranian religions. Shahrastānī, perhaps following Bīrūnī, also uses the word in this sense: he classifies the Zoroastrians (*al-Zardūshtiyya*) as a subdivision of *al-majūs*.[86] What Bīrūnī is telling us is that there used to be communities which practised pre-Zoroastrian forms of Iranian religion. They were pre-Zoroastrian in the sense of predating the forcible imposition of official Zoroastrianism credited to Gushtāsb and his son, so what Bīrūnī is talking about is really the different forms of Iranian religion encountered by the Sasanian kings. (How

84 Cf. S. Shaked, 'First Man, First King: Notes on Semitic-Iranian Syncretism and Iranian Mythological Transformations', in S. Shaked, D. Shulman, and G.G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution and Permanence in the History of Religion dedicated to J. Zwi Werblowsky*, Leiden 1987, 252; idem, 'Some Islamic Reports concerning Zoroastrianism', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17, 1994, 46; idem, *Dualism in Transformation. Varieties of Religious Experience in Sasanian Iran*, London 1994, 71, 97 f.

85 Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 318 (for *shamsiyya*, read *shamaniyya*).

86 Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-niḥal*, ed. W. Cureton, London 1842–1846, 182, 185; tr. D. Gimaret and G. Monnot, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, UNESCO 1986, 635, 642.

far they were pre-Zoroastrian in the sense of rooted in the traditions rejected by the adherents of the Gāthās rather than simply different developments of a common heritage is another question on which his information throws no light.) The ancient *majūs* must be the ancient Shamaniyya, and Bīrūnī confirms this in his account of how the Shamaniyya were suppressed: "the *majūs* have survived to this day in the land of India", he says.[87] Here he is telling us that they survived in Iran as well, not just as Buddhists (as we have
38 learnt | already from Ḥamza and Khwārizmī), but also as Zoroastrians. They had retained some of their former beliefs, we are told, having taken something from the laws of the Shamaniyya and the ancient Harranians with them. This is precisely what one would expect to have happened when the Sasanians set about imposing religious unity: the diversity came to be represented within the official religion.

What was it that the ancient *majūs* had taken with them from Sumanism and ancient Harranian religion? Bīrūnī does not say. This is deeply disappointing. He seems to be the only pre-modern scholar to know about ancient Iranian religion living on within Zoroastrianism, just as he seems to be the only scholar before modern times to know (as will be seen) that Indians and Zoroastrians were divided over the status of the *dēv*s: it is impossible not to be awed by his learning and acumen. By the same token it is hard to forgive him his silence here. The information he had is not likely to turn up in any other source. Unfortunately, all we can do is try to guess what he had in mind.

One would assume the answer to be a cluster of features, and they could include worship of the astral bodies, which Bīrūnī identifies as the religion of the Pīshdādid kings before their acceptance of Zoroaster[88] and for which the Harranians were famed. But worship of the sun, moon, and other astral bodies was so intrinsic a feature of Zoroastrianism that he (or his source) can hardly have regarded it as special to some Zoroastrian priests rather than shared by all of them.[89] A more interesting answer would be worship of the *dēv*s. Bīrūnī mentions that the veneration of these beings (whom he equates with angels) was peculiar to the Indians, adding that "people say that Zoroaster made enemies of the Shamaniyya by calling the devils (*al-shayāṭīn*) by the name of the class which they consider the highest", and that "this (usage) has survived in Persian thanks to the influence of (*min jihat*) Zoroastrianism (*al-majūsiyya*)".[90] In other words, Zoroaster called the demons *dēv*s, or, as we would

87 *Hind*, 10/15 = i, 21.

88 *Āthār*, 204.

89 Cf. M. Stausberg, *Zarathustra and Zoroastrianism*, London 2008, 31, 48.

90 *Hind*, 44/68 f. = i, 91.

say, he demoted the *dēv*s from divine to demonic status. But the Shamaniyya who resented this demotion could simply be the Buddhists, who are well known to have revered the *deva*s, bringing them with them to eastern Iran, and the fact that Bīrūnī is using *majūsiyya* in the sense of Zoroastrianism here suggests that he did not associate veneration of the *dēv*s with the ancient *majūs* in particular. A more plausible answer would perhaps be reincarnation, known to be a Sumanī belief and credited to the Sabians of Harran as well.[91] Among the Zoroastrians it is reported for Mazdak, Bihāfarīdh and all Khurramīs.[92] Shahrastānī also reports it for the Kanthaeans,[93] whom some classified as | 39
dualists and others as Sabians,[94] and who are said to have adopted fire-worship when the Sasanian king Pērōz (459–487) prohibited all religions other than Zoroastrianism.[95] Bīrūnī's ancient *majūs* could have brought the doctrine into Zoroastrianism in response to such royal pressure too. But this is only plausible if Bīrūnī's statement about the ancient *majūs* is based on a literary source rather than personal observation, for he does not mention reincarnation as either a Sumanī or a Sabian/Harranian belief himself.[96] His source for the pre-Zoroastrian *majūs* could have been Īrānshahrī or Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, whose work he knew very well. The latter discussed the beliefs of the Harranian Sabians in a lost work of his[97] and seems to have believed in reincarnation himself.[98]

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91 Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 65 ff./ii, § 1396 (where only Greek authorities are cited); ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, v, 152, citing the philosopher Sarakhsī; Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 249 f.; tr. ii, 169 (where most of the information actually paraphrases an account originally referring to the followers of ʿAbdallāh b. Muʿāwiya and other Khurramīs, cf. R. Freitag, *Seelenwanderung in der islamischen Häresie*, Berlin 1985, 9 ff.). It is also credited to the philosophers and Sabians by Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 133; tr. i, 511, where the Sabians could be the Harranians or pagans in general.

92 Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-iṣlāḥ*, ed. Ḥ. Minuchihr and M. Muḥaqqiq, Tehran 1377, 159, 169; cf. Abū ʿĪsā in Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* (1991), 584.4; Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 133; tr. i, 511; W. Madelung, 'Khurramiyya', *EI*^{2}.

93 Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 197; tr. i, 671 f.

94 Abū ʿĪsā in Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* (1991), 589.

95 Theodore Bar Koni, *Livres des scolies*, tr. R. Hespel and R. Draguet, Louvain 1981, § 84 f. (255–257); cf. W. Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, Albany 1988, 3.

96 Cf. his *Hind*, ch. 5, where he cites Plato, Proclus, Mani, and the Sufis for comparative purposes, without associating the two Greeks with Harran (contrast Masʿūdī, above, note 91).

97 Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 68/ii, § 1397. Regrettably, all Masʿūdī says about the book is that it contained things too repugnant for him to mention.

98 P. Kraus (ed. and tr.), 'Raziana I: al-sīra al-falsafiyya', *Orientalia* 4, 1935, 314 f.; tr. 328 f. (reprinted without the old pagination in Rāzī, *al-Rasāʾil al-falsafiyya*, ed. P. Kraus, Cairo

But no doubt it could have been others too. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any way of making up for Bīrūnī's silence.

Paganism and Zoroastrianism

One interesting feature to emerge from the accounts of the Sumaniyya is that Muslim authors distinguish sharply between paganism and Zoroastrianism. If by paganism we mean *dēv* worship, so too of course did the Zoroastrians, but Zoroastrianism was nonetheless in some ways a form of paganism itself. Most obviously, it was polytheist. This is not perhaps of great significance, for like Greek pagans before them and Arabian pagans after them, Zoroastrians would claim to worship one God, all the other deities being simply "the king's great men".[99] Even recast as a form of monotheism, however, Zoroastrianism was pagan in the sense of inseparable from its civic context. It was not formulated as a set of doctrines that could be presented to anyone regardless of who or what they were, in the "to whom it may concern" style; rather, it was the myths and rituals of a particular people, and its focus was on the cult that connected this people, or a particular subdivision of it, with the divine, above all sacrifice. Zoroastrianism did have something of a detachable "philosophy", as the Greeks would have called it, and it was also less tolerant in its attitude to other gods than most pagan religions: a whole range of deities were rejected as *dēv*s. But whatever exactly might count as a *dēv* in post-Avestic times, the Zoroastrians freely worshipped non-Avestic deities such as Sasan, Bagdana or Nana, who
40 was as popular in | western Iran as she was at Panjikant,[100] for pagan deities were much like monotheist saints: their field was patronage, intercession, the passing of gifts and services between the divine and the human worlds, not the formulation of doctrines about the nature of reality.

To be a Zoroastrian was first and foremost to participate in the official cult, which functioned as a sign of loyalty to the Sasanian polity. When Kirdīr boasts of having disseminated the religion, he says that he has set up fire temples and appointed priests all over the empire and beyond: of persuading people of the

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1939, 97–111); cf. E.A. Alexandrin, 'Rāzī and his Mediaeval Opponents: Discussions concerning Tanāsukh and the Afterlife', in M. Szuppe (ed.), *Iran: Questions et Connaissances*, ii, Paris 2002, 397–407.

99 G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, Leipzig 1880, 42. The Zoroastrian gods other than Ohrmazd have been reduced to angels already in Abū ʿĪsā's account (in Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* (2012), 639).

100 M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathustras*, i, 2002, 249, 253; Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 130 ff.

truth of Zoroastrian tenets there is no mention. When Pērōz prohibited all religions other than Zoroastrianism, the Kanthaeans added fire worship to their cult: they did not change their beliefs.[101] And when the Christians were asked to renounce their religion, what they were actually asked to do, according to themselves, was not to renounce anything, but rather to sacrifice to the gods, sun, moon, fire or the elements, in short to combine their Christianity with participation in the Zoroastrian cult:[102] here as in the Roman empire, all they were being asked to provide was a token of loyalty, an elementary assurance that they inhabited the same political and cultural universe as everyone else, which was of course precisely what they did not. Of abjuration formulas, demands for affirmation of belief in Ohrmazd, or recitals of a Zoroastrian confession of faith we do not hear a word.[103]

It is not surprising, then, that the Christians thought of Zoroastrianism as a religion of the same type as the Greek paganism they had fought against in the Roman empire. They often labelled the Zoroastrians pagans (*ḥanpe*), argued against their worship of fire, derided their offerings to idols, and sometimes listed their many deities by the names of their Greek counterparts.[104] What is more surprising is that the Muslims consistently treat Zoroastrianism as a faith-based religion much like Christianity or Islam. It is possible that they had a different impression of it back in the days when the jurists debated whether or how the Zoroastrians were entitled to *dhimmī* status.[105] But though the heresiographers, writing from the third/ninth century onwards, complain that Zoroastrianism is full of errant nonsense (meaning myths) and lacking in uniformity,[106] they do not classify it as polytheist, argue against its worship of fire, deride its offering to idols, or even mention the Zoroastrian habit of calling fire the son of God.[107] The main reason for this difference must be that the Muslims did not have to establish themselves in Iran by laboriously converting

101 Cf. above, note 95.

102 E.g. Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 24, 29, 53, 79 f.

103 Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 51; J. Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 2006, 57, cf. 58.

104 M.G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, Princeton 1984, 292n; Walker, *Legend of Mar Qardagh*, 23; Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 29, 42, 71, 72, 74.

105 Cf. Y. Friedman, 'Classification of Unbelievers in Sunnī Muslim Law and Tradition', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 22, 1998, esp. 179 ff.

106 E.g. Abū ʿĪsā in Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad* (2012), 641 (*al-sukhf wa'l-khurāfāt*); Maqdisī, *Bad'*, iv, 26 (more *hawas* and *takhlīṭ* than any other people).

107 Cf. R.C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, New York 1961, 59. For examples, see Yasna 1:12, 17:11; Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 53 (also water).

Zoroastrians on the ground, venturing into their villages or towns to persuade them that fire worship, polytheism or libations were wrong. As conquerors they
41 could | ignore the *pagani*, the rural people who came to be a byword for heathen ways, until the *pagani* came to them, having converted of their own accord and/or acquired enough knowledge of Islam to present Zoroastrianism as a faith intelligible to them. Paganism was no longer dangerous. What preoccupied the Muslims were the earlier recipients of revelation, who offered what were rival constructions of the same religious space: there was no question of remaining silent when *they* talked about sons of God. But Zoroastrianism did not matter except in so far as it recast itself as a set of doctrines defensible in terms of *kalām*, the form in which the heresiographers confronted it.

It was not until they got to India that paganism became a real problem to the Muslims. They deemed some of the philosophical views of the Sumaniyya sufficiently unsettling to pay some polemical attention to them, as we have seen, but they merely reported on their idolatry, and of their gods they say nothing at all, except for Bīrūnī's comment on their reverence of *dēv*s. There was more interest in the pagans of Harran, partly because they were closer to the metropolis and partly because they were reputed to combine their polytheist cult with Greek philosophy of the most prestigious kind. They were treated as an object of curiosity rather than horror. Like other pockets of genuine paganism, they had the appearance of archaic survivors from a bygone age, much as hunter-gatherers were to look in a world of steam-engines and factories; and since they did not pose a threat, the Muslims were free to reflect on them with scholarly detachment and use them, as the hunter-gatherers were also to be used, as evidence for the bygone days in question. It was in this speculative vein that they cast the Sumanīs and the Sabians as representatives of the earliest stage in the history of human religion, an initial era of error explicable in terms of purely human developments before the sequence of divine revelations began.

CHAPTER 10

A New Text on Ismailism at the Samanid Court*

With Luke Treadwell

In his *Ādāb al-mulūk*, a book of advice for kings, the famous littérateur al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038) cautions rulers against a number of potential disasters, including that of falling prey to heretical missionaries. By way of warning he recounts how the Samanid amir Naṣr II b. Aḥmad, known as al-Saʿīd (r. 301–331/914–943), was converted to Ismailism along with other potentates, thereby throwing considerable light on an episode which has so far been known only from two sources, Ibn al-Nadīm and Niẓām al-Mulk. In what follows we offer a translation and discussion of al-Thaʿālibī's text as a token of gratitude to Donald Richards, from whose erudition, good humour and personal warmth we have both benefited greatly over the years.[1]

I Translation[2]

[168]

#458 Among them (the evils that afflict kings) are the adroit and unbelieving swindlers who proselytize on behalf of followers of selfish whims, innovators and heretics (*ahl al-ahwāʾ wa'l-bidaʿ wa-dhawī 'l-ilḥād fī 'l-niḥal*), such as the Bāṭiniyya, Qarāmiṭa, Ismāʿīliyya and other proponents of elementary qualities and celestial | bodies who do not affirm the existence of prophethood and who call prophets (mere) 'lawgivers and (ful- 38

* We are indebted to Professor S. Hanioğlu for helping us obtain a microfilm of the manuscript and to Professors M. Cook and W. Madelung for reading an earlier draft.

1 Crone (a colleague of Richards from 1977 to 1990) found the text; Treadwell (a student of Crone and a colleague of Richards from 1993 to 2000) supplied most of the information about the events to which it refers (cf. W.L. Treadwell, 'The Political History of the Sāmānid State', Oxford D.Phil. 1991, ch. 6). The translation and interpretation are joint.

2 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, J. al-ʿAṭiyya, ed., Beirut, 1990, 168–172, reproducing MS Süleymaniye Kütübhanesi (Istanbul), Esʿad Efendi no. 1808/1 fols. 56ᵛ–58ᵛ. [Ed.: The numbers in square brackets refer to the page numbers of the published edition, and ##458–460 refer to its paragraph numbering.]

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fillers of) needs' (*aṣḥāb al-nawāmīs wa'l-ḥawā'ij*). They will frequently insinuate their ways into the affairs of kings who have not heard [169] the teaching of the *mutakallim*s or studied the science of *kalām*. They will take them aside and deceive them with their mellifluous charms, their gilded sophistry and their spurious doctrines, claiming to transport them from the slavery of the law to the freedom of heresy (*min riqq al-sharīʿa ilā ḥurriyyat al-ilḥād*) and to liberate them from the shackles of religious observance, giving them license to abandon prayer and other acts of worship and to indulge their desires. Thus they slip a halter (over their heads) and take hold of their reins. For as they (the kings) will take the opportunity to rest in comfort, security and ease, they (the missionaries) will be emboldened to engage in forbidden acts, commit sins, shed blood, seize the wealth (of others), break covenants, violate writs and make light of Islam.

#459 Al-Saʿīd Naṣr b. Aḥmad fell into this trap. It had been set by Abū 'l-Ṭayyib al-Muṣʿabī[3] and Abū 'l-Ḥasan Ibn Sawāda al-Rāzī,[4] two arch heretics (*anyāb al-mulḥidīn*) who were relentlessly trying to become intimate with him. Among the things related about him is that he had repented of drinking and shedding blood, fearing the Station of his Lord (cf. Q 55:46; 79:40), and that he had knocked on the door of pious observance, secluding himself to pray and weep in extreme fear of death. But al-Muṣʿabī and Ibn Sawāda continually deceived him with their honeyed words and gradually introduced him to their doctrine. They told him that worry and grief were no protection against adversity and misfortune, and that it was better to engage in pleasure and constant drinking and listen to beautiful singing girls so as to rid the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqa*) of its trouble in this corporeal world (*al-ʿālam al-jusdānī*), which consists entirely of worries and pain. For nothing but pleasant diversion and song, music-making and carousal[5] would drive away (worries and pain). They made it seem to him that the bitterness of death lay in his fear of it whereas (in fact) death was utter bliss and the ultimate repose because it was the gate to the spiritual world in which there are no pains, no sorrows and no terrors. (They added) more nonsense of a similar nature until he began to accept what they told him and embarked on their course.

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3 Muḥammad b. Ḥātim al-Muṣʿabī, a secretary who became vizier in 330/941–942 at the latest; see below, section 11(b).

4 A missionary also mentioned by Niẓām al-Mulk; cf. below, section 11(a).

5 Reading *qasf* for *qaṣab* (as suggested by Everett Rowson).

Abū ʿAlī al-Jayhānī[6] went the same way and added to their insults by calling the jurists bearers of filth, meaning that they speak about menstruation, purification after excretion, and [170] the like. Then they sang the praises of that doctrine, i.e. the doctrine of the Ismailis, which is the doctrine of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Bazdahī,[7] and they induced him (the amir) to summon him (al-Bazdahī) and to listen to his words. So he (the amir) ordered that he be brought, and when he arrived, he was honoured and revered and found acceptance for the accursed mission and the foolish ideas to which he gave open expression. Al-Saʿīd ordered that seventy dinars weighing a hundred *mithqāl*s (of gold) each[8] should be struck for despatch to the lord of the diocese (*jazīra*), who was the imam of the mission in their view; so they were struck.
God then favoured Islam by causing al-Muṣʿabī to perish; the position of the people (the Ismailis) weakened, and the cream turned to scum. Al-Bazdahī returned to his village holding firm to his misguided doctrine. He had some of those dinars with him, others were with Ibn Sawāda.
When al-Saʿīd died and his son al-Ḥamīd took his place, Ibn Sawāda resumed singing the praises of that doctrine to him. He wrote to al-Bazdahī telling him to send the most skilful and articulate debaters among his missionaries to al-Ḥamīd's court to invite him (to convert), so he did. Al-Ḥamīd was a perceptive man who had studied religion (*mutafaqqihan fī 'l-dīn*) and received (*ḥadīth*) from Muḥammad, known as the Great Judge (*al-ḥākim al-jalīl*), the leading scholar in the school of Abū Ḥanīfa.[9] When al-Bazdahī's envoy arrived, he came to al-Ḥamīd in secret and called upon him to convert. Al-Ḥamīd said to him: "If this call is to something other than Islam, then I seek refuge in God from it; and if it is to Islam, then Muḥammad | has said it before you, the master of those who call to the truth, who is the Prophet Muḥam- 39 40

6 Both the manuscript (fol. 57r) and the printed text have Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī, a Muʿtazilite *mutakallim* who died in 303/915 f. and who cannot possibly be intended here. On Abū ʿAlī al-Jayhānī, see below, section II(d). He was vizier from 326/938 to 330/941–942 at the latest.

7 The missionary al-Nasafī, who came from the village of Bazda near Nakhshab/Nasaf and whose *ism* is normally given as Muḥammad b. Aḥmad; cf. S.M. Stern, 'The Early Ismāʿīlī Missionaries in North-West Persia and in Khurāsān and Transoxania', in his *Studies in Early Ismāʿīlism*, Jerusalem and Leiden, 1983, 219 (reprinted with new pagination from the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23, 1960).

8 A *mithqāl* was 4.2 grammes (*EI*[2], s.v. 'dīnār'), so they will have weighed close to a pound each!

9 For this person, see below, note 48.

mad.[10] There is nothing to add to the perfection of his religion; what has been transmitted to us of his traditions and laws suffices for us.[11] Suppose that I accepted this doctrine: what would be the point of hiding it from people? Zuhayr, for all his paganism, says 'A veil conceals abominations; you will not find anything veiling the good'." The envoy replied, "This is what the imam lays down." He said, "This can only be due to fear of the common folk or of the elite or of the ruler. If it is for fear of the common folk, they are my subjects and none among them dares to oppose me. If it is fear of the elite, [they too obey me; and if it is fear of the ruler,][12] what authority is above me and what hand above mine? So there is no reason to hide this religion or to (require) an oath[13] or a compact about it." [171] So the unbelievers were confounded;[14] he was reduced to silence and did not reply but returned to al-Bazdahī and told him what had happened. Al-Bazdahī feared the worst. Al-Ḥamīd lost no time in demanding from Ibn Sawāda the return of the aforementioned dinars, but he denied that he had them and swore mighty oaths that they were not in his possession, that he did not know anything about them, and that they were not in his house or in the possession of any of his companions. But he (al-Ḥamīd) then stumbled upon most of those dinars in a hiding place in his house. They were removed and al-Ḥamīd had him taken away and beaten until he perished. Al-Bazdahī was ordered to present himself and asked to hand over the rest of the dinars. But he did not do so. When he was addressed on the subject of his doctrine, he asked for a disputation (about it). "If the proof goes against me I shall repent of my doctrine and abandon my view", he said. But he (al-Ḥamīd) did not dispute with him. He asked the jurists what he should do with him, and their response was that he should be killed. So he was killed and crucified.

#460 Among the kings of the time who were disgraced by this corrupt doc-
41 trine were Bakr b. Mālik, Abū ʿAlī b. Ilyās, and Abū | Jaʿfar b. Bānū,

10 The gloss is presumably inserted to ensure that the reader does not take the reference to be to Muḥammad *al-ḥakīm al-jalīl* mentioned five lines earlier. (We owe this point to Michael Cook.)

11 Reading *ḥasbunā mā* for *ḥasuna mā*.

12 Some such words must have been omitted here.

13 Reading *lil-yamīn* for *lil-mayn*.

14 Read *fa-buhita* with the MS for *nabihat* of the printed text, cf. Q 2:258: *fa-buhita alladhī kafara*. (We owe this clarification to Michael Cook.) It is odd that the Qurʾānic singular, which suits the context here, has been changed to the plural.

> Khalaf's father, as well as Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Sijzī and Abū ʿAlī b. Sīmjūr.[15] This vile[16] creed was spawned and hatched in Khurasan, and if it had not been for the readiness of the great sultan Yamīn al-Dawla Amīn al-Milla Abū ʾl-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. Nāṣir al-Dīn (i.e. Maḥmūd of Ghazna) to apply his efforts in support of the faith, upholding the hallmarks of Islam, cutting the herbage of heresy from its base and plucking the plants of *taʿṭīl*[17] from their roots, then the iniquitous infidels[18] would have raised their ugly heads,[19] all traces of the religion would have been obliterated, the waymarks of Islam would have been effaced, and the Muslims would have been humiliated.

The story ends with more encomia of Maḥmūd of Ghazna (388–421/998–1030), in whose lifetime the work was composed. Its recipient was Maḥmūd's brother-in-law, the Khwārizmshāh Abū ʾl-ʿAbbās Maʾmūn II (399–407/1009–1017), and its date of composition can be narrowed down to between 403/1012 and 407/1017.[20]

II The Events

(a) *The Three Versions*

How does al-Thaʿālibī's version compare with those of Ibn al-Nadīm and Niẓām al-Mulk? We may start by summarizing their accounts.

Ibn al-Nadīm's is short. According to him, the missionary al-Nasafī (alias al-Bazdahī) converted Naṣr b. Aḥmad to Ismailism and persuaded him to pay 119 dinars, each worth 1000 dinars,[21] as blood money for al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazī, the previous leader of the Khurasani mission said by Ibn al-Nadīm to have died in Naṣr's prison.[22] Al-|Nasafī claimed that the money would be sent to 42
the ruler of the Maghrib, al-Qāʾim (322–334/934–46). Naṣr then fell ill, repented

15 For all these people, see below, section II(d).

16 Reading *radīʾa* for *radiyya*.

17 Reducing God to an abstract concept, the opposite error of anthropomorphism.

18 Read *al-kafara al-fajara* with the MS for *al-fikra al-fajara* of the printed text. The expression is Qurʾānic, cf. Q 80:43 (drawn to our attention by Everett Rowson).

19 Tentatively reading *nijādahā* for *anjādahā*.

20 Thus ʿAṭiyya's introduction, 17. Maʾmūn was married to Maḥmūd's sister; cf. W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, London, 1968, 289 (of the original pagination).

21 In other words, each weighed 1000 *mithqāl*s (close to nine and a half pounds of gold!).

22 On him, see Stern, 'Missionaries', 217–219. For his imprisonment, see below, note 152.

of his conversion and died, whereupon his son and successor Nūḥ (alias al-Ḥamīd) assembled jurists for a public debate with al-Nasafī, who was defeated. He was also found to have kept 40 of the 119 dinars. Thoroughly disgraced, he was killed along with the leading missionaries and generals who had converted to the cause.[23]

According to Niẓām al-Mulk, whose account is the longest of the three, al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī appointed al-Nasafī as his successor and advised him to attempt the conversion of the ruling elite in Bukhārā. Al-Nasafī duly went off to Transoxania, leaving Ibn Sawāda as his deputy in Marwarrūdh. Finding circumstances unpromising in Bukhārā, al-Nasafī established himself at Nasaf (his native area), where he converted several high-ranking people. The proselytes told him to go to Bukhārā, where he successfully converted other members of the elite, including Naṣr II himself. This caused the leaders of the army to plan a coup, described in dramatic detail, but their plans were foiled by Naṣr's son Nūḥ, who persuaded Naṣr to abdicate. Naṣr vowed henceforth to devote himself to repentance and was sent to jail. Nūḥ summoned al-Nasafī, who was executed, and gave orders for the arrest and execution of Ibn Sawāda at Marwarrūdh, while he and the troops went off to spend seven days killing Ismailis in Bukhārā and its environs.[24] For all that, the Ismailis remained strong enough to make a second bid for power in the reign of Manṣūr I b. Nūḥ (350–365/961–76).[25]

Al-Thaʿālibī's account differs from Ibn al-Nadīm's and Niẓām al-Mulk's above all in the role it ascribes to al-Muṣʿabī and the missionary Ibn Sawāda, who are not mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm at all while Niẓām al-Mulk only mentions Ibn Sawāda, and then only as a deputy left behind by al-Nasafī in Marwarrūdh. In al-Thaʿālibī it is by al-Muṣʿabī and Ibn Sawāda that Naṣr II is converted; al-Nasafī is only summoned to complete their work.

43 Al-Thaʿālibī also differs from the other two sources in that he does not have Naṣr II repent of his conversion. Like them, he places the Ismaili interlude towards the end of Naṣr's life and credits him with a period of repentance, but Naṣr's repentance here precedes his conversion instead of following it. Naṣr II is sick and afraid of death, and this is why he has abandoned his former life; it is for the same reason that he is receptive to Ismailism. There is no suggestion that

23 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, R. Tajaddud, ed., Tehran, 1971, 239 = *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, B. Dodge, tr., New York, 1970, i, 467 f.; also translated in Stern, 'Missionaries', 224.

24 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk* (*Siyāsatnāma*), H. Darke, ed., 2nd edition, Tehran, 1985, 287–299 = id., *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, H. Darke, tr., London, 1960, 218–227 (ch. 46, ##8–21).

25 Ibid., 299–305 = 227–233 (ch. 46, ##22–30).

he abjured Ismailism before his death, as he does in the other two accounts, nor does he abdicate in favour of his son, as he does in Niẓām al-Mulk's, and there is no mention of the military plot that Niẓām al-Mulk describes at length. The key event in the downfall of Ismailism here is al-Muṣʿabī's death.

Finally, al-Thaʿālibī says nothing about a second episode, and his list of converts is quite different from Niẓām al-Mulk's.

All in all, al-Thaʿālibī has more in common with Ibn al-Nadīm than with Niẓām al-Mulk, and there is even verbal correspondence between them at one point: both say that Nūḥ "stumbled on" (*ʿathara ʿalā*) the dinars that the missionaries had retained. For all that, they are too different to be based on the same source, except in the sense that both are ultimately based on rumours circulating after the event. The same is true of Ibn al-Nadīm in relation to Niẓām al-Mulk. We have three independent versions, then. How might one reconstruct the events in the light of them?

(b) *The First Episode*

There is no way of checking al-Thaʿālibī's account of Ibn Sawāda, but he seems to be right that al-Muṣʿabī played a crucial role in the events. The Samanid historians, who do their best to edit the Ismaili interlude out of history, are generally silent on al-Muṣʿabī,[26] but al-Balkhī mentions him among the *aṣḥāb al-qarāmiṭa*;[27] others implicitly confirm that he was an Ismaili;[28] and the Sunni Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142) provides some clinching information. | 44
According to him, a traditionist by the name of Abū Yaʿlā ʿAbd al-Muʾmin b. Khalaf al-ʿAmmī completed a recitation of the Qurʾān on the evening of Ramaḍān 27 in an unspecified year, apparently in Nasaf, and proceeded to pray for the death of al-Muṣʿabī and the Qarāmiṭa, accusing the former, who was vizier at the time, of *zandaqa* and *ilḥād*, and praying also for the delivery of

26 Most of what there is on him is collected in S. Nafīsī, *Aḥwāl-i wa ashʿār-i Rūdakī*, Tehran, 1309–1319, ii, 492–495 (nothing on his Ismailism). Compare Barthold, *Turkestan*, 225 ("The historians have not a word to say of the heresy of Naṣr").

27 Balkhī, *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, ʿA. Ḥabībī, ed., Tehran, 1350, 293–294.

28 He was familiar with the thought of the Ismaili philosopher Abū ʾl-Haytham al-Jurjānī, whose views on an important doctrinal point he is said to have misunderstood (H. Corbin and M. Moʿin, *Commentaire de la qasida ismaelienne d'Abū ʾl-Haitham Jorjani*, Tehran and Paris, 1955, 35–37). And Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī was rumoured to have written a book on the Qarāmiṭa for him in return for the judgeship of Samarqand; the book was presumably in favour of Ismailism rather than against it since the locals wanted to kill him when they found out about it (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, F. Wüstenfeld, ed., Leipzig, 1866–1873, i, 619–620, citing the Baykandī traditionist al-Sulaymānī).

the Nasafī scholar and *raʾīs* Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd b. Ibrāhīm. The latter, according to al-Samarqandī (a pupil of al-Nasafī's), had been summoned to the court by al-Muṣʿabī as a result of the fanaticism of the Ismailis (*taʿaṣṣub al-qarāmiṭa*). Abū Yaʿlā's chilling prayer was effective: a few days later the news arrived that al-Muṣʿabī had been killed by the *ḥasham* (i.e. the Turkish troops stationed in Bukhārā) and that Abū ʿUthmān had returned safely from Bukhārā and was now persecuting the Qarāmiṭa himself.[29] The life of this scholar had been consumed by the fanaticism of the Ismailis, which had inflicted many trials on him until al-Bazdawī (= al-Bazdahī, in other words al-Nasafī) was killed along with his companion, Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. Muʿādh al-Manādīlī al-Bukhārī, known as al-Ṣabbāgh. The two of them were crucified at the beginning of the reign of al-Ḥamīd in the year 333/944.[30]

This confirms al-Thaʿālibī's presentation of al-Muṣʿabī as a key figure in the Ismaili interlude. It also confirms two of Niẓām al-Mulk's claims: the troops must indeed have taken action against Ismailism; and they must indeed have done so while Naṣr was still alive (since Naṣr outlived al-Muṣʿabī according to al-Thaʿālibī). The only problem is that it does not leave much time for al-
45 Muṣʿabī's vizierate. Naṣr died on Rajab 27, 331,[31] and al-Muṣʿabī died some | time before him. One would thus assume the chilling prayer which preceded his death to have been made in Ramaḍān, 330. But if al-Muṣʿabī died in Ramaḍān, 330, when did he become vizier? His predecessor, Abū ʿAlī al-Jayhānī, also died in 330, apparently as vizier.[32] Since there is no doubt that al-Muṣʿabī, previously leader of the *dīwān al-rasāʾil*,[33] rose to the vizierate,[34] one solution would be that he only held the position for a couple of months. But it seems more likely

29 Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *al-Qand fī dhikr ʿulamāʾ Samarqand*, N.M. al-Fāryābī, ed., Riyad, 1991, 305–306, citing ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. al-Muʿtaṣim al-Nasafī; al-Samarqandī, *Muntakhab al-qand fī taʾrīkh Samarqand*, MS, Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), manuscrit arabe, no. 6284, fols. 43a–b. On these works, see J. Weinberger, 'The Authorship of Two Twelfth-Century Transoxanian Biographical Dictionaries', *Arabica* 33, 1986, 369–382.

30 Nasafī, *Qand*, 88. The Ismaili al-Nasafī's *ism* is here given as Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Hamdawayh.

31 Cf. below, note 39. For the sake of clarity we only give *hijrī* dates when the discussion involves chronology.

32 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ʾl-taʾrīkh*, C.J. Tornberg, ed., Leiden, 1851–1876, viii, 294; ed. Beirut 1965–1967 (hereafter B), viii, 393. Ibn al-Athīr could of course call him Naṣr's vizier with reference to past office, as in his report of the death of Balʿamī (viii, 283/B 378).

33 Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, Ghanī and Fayyād, ed., Tehran, 1324, 107.1.

34 It is confirmed by al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr*, Cairo, 1934, iv, 75.

that al-Jayhānī had been dismissed some time before 330, for he and al-Muṣʿabī may have died as a result of the same military action by the Bukhārān troops.[35]

If Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī confirms part of Niẓām al-Mulk's story about the downfall of Ismailism, other sources show the rest of it to be fiction. It is characteristic that Niẓām al-Mulk knows nothing about either al-Muṣʿabī or Abū ʿAlī al-Jayhānī, let alone the Manādīlī known as al-Ṣabbāgh who was al-Nasafī's collaborator (and on whom we have not found any further information). His long story of a military plot involves an anonymous *sipahsālār* who was allegedly offered the throne by the troops and killed by the valiant Nūḥ, but who cannot be identified. He would have to be either Aytāsh, the chief *ḥājib* who commanded the troops in Bukhārā, or Abū ʿAlī b. Muḥtāj al-Ṣāghānī, the governor of Khurasan at the time, but Aytāsh is mentioned among the converts to Ismailism and Abū ʿAlī al-Ṣāghānī was not killed by Nūḥ.[36] If anybody plotted, it seems to have been the valiant Nūḥ himself: numismatic evidence suggests that he made a bid for the throne in 329–330, when his name appears on coins from Ṭukhāristān and Farghāna in lieu of his father's. But Naṣr's name remains on the precious metal coinage of the mints of Nīshāpūr and Samarqand right up to 331 and reappears on the coinage of Ṭukhāristān in 331, so apparently the revolt (if a revolt it was) came to an end a year before Naṣr's death. It is impossible to tell whether the episode was connected with Naṣr's conversion to Ismailism or with Nūḥ's own struggles against his brother Ismāʿīl over the heir | apparency, 46
but the events were probably as confusing to Niẓām al-Mulk as they are to us.[37] He seems to have tidied them up, and nicely sanitised them, by recourse to a famous prototype, the story of the rise and fall of Mazdakism at the Sasanian court as told, among others, by Niẓām al-Mulk himself. In this story too a king (Kavād) is seduced by heretics, whereupon his valiant son (Khusraw)

35 As conjectured by Barthold, *Turkestan*, 257.

36 Cf. below, note 60 (Aytāsh); *EI*², s.v. 'Muḥtādjids'; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 254n (where the problem is noted).

37 For Nūḥ's struggles with Ismāʿīl over the succession towards the end of Naṣr's life, see al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Rāḍī wa'l-Muttaqī bi'llāh*, J. Heyworth Dunne, ed., Cairo, 1935, 237. Naṣr resolved the dispute by having Ismāʿīl killed. For the coins, see F. Schwarz, *Balḫ und die Landschaften am oberen Oxus* (Sylloge numorum arabicorum Tübingen, XIVc Ḫurāsān), Tübingen, 2002, nos 186, 592–594, 596 (dirhams of Balkh and Andarāba); T. Mayer, *Nord- und Ostzentralasien* (Sylloge numorum arabicorum Tübingen, XVb Mittelasien II), Tübingen, 1998, nos 44–45 (*fulūs* of Farghāna). The numismatic evidence only came to our attention after the article had gone to press: Treadwell hopes to discuss the coins cited here, as well as several related unpublished issues, in greater detail in a forthcoming publication.

takes action against them; and here too the son deposes his father or makes him abdicate (or rules jointly with him).[38] In historical fact Naṣr remained on the throne until his death. He died on Rajab 27, 331/April 6, 943,[39] apparently of tuberculosis after an illness of thirteen months.[40] Nūḥ was enthroned after the customary three days' mourning on Shaʿbān 1, 331/April 10, 943.[41]

It is easy to see how Niẓām al-Mulk's story could develop. The sources agree that Naṣr II fell ill some time before his death and withdrew from courtly life to devote himself to pious exercises.[42] If Ibn al-Athīr is right that his illness lasted thirteen months, it will have begun in Jumādā II, 330, four months before al-Muṣʿabī was killed. He will thus have adopted his ascetic lifestyle
47 close to the | time of the reaction against Ismailism, and to some this will have conveyed the impression that he was repenting of his conversion. To al-Thaʿālibī, on the other hand, his withdrawal suggested that he only became an Ismaili after he had fallen ill. Both views are undoubtedly meant to exonerate him: either he repudiated his error when he fell ill or else he only adopted it after illness had unsettled his mind. To those who held him to have repented of his conversion, his withdrawal will have allowed for the further embellishment that Nūḥ had made him abdicate, suggested by the parallel between Kavād and himself.

Just as Naṣr II remained on the throne until he died, so he seems to have remained an Ismaili. Possibly, the man with whom he replaced al-Muṣʿabī was an Ismaili too.[43] No doubt the progress of Ismailism was checked by the killing

38 Niẓām al-Mulk, 278 = 211 (ch. 44, #26); cf. P. Crone, 'Kavād's Heresy and Mazdak's Revolt', *Iran* 29, 1991 [Ed.: included as article 1 in the present volume], 23 and notes 50–52 thereto.

39 Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, Hyderabad, 1976, vii, 27 (s.v. 'al-Sāmānī'); Barthold, *Turkestan*, 255. Numerous other sources place Naṣr's death in 331 without giving the precise day or month. The earlier date of Ramaḍān 12, 330/May 31, 942, found in some late sources, is accepted by Barthold as the date of Naṣr's supposed abdication (but it predates the military reaction as dated in the *Qand*, above, note 29).

40 Thus Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 300/B 401, 402. The claim that he was murdered by his *ghilmān* rests on confusion with his father (cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 255).

41 Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, M. Riḍawī, ed., Tehran, 1351, 132 = id., *The History of Bukhara*, R.N. Frye, tr., Cambridge, Mass., 1954, 97; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 301/B 403; Gardīzī, *Taʾrīkh* (*Zayn al-akhbār*), M. Qazwīnī, ed., Tehran, 1327, 24; ʿA. Ḥabībī, ed., Tehran, 1347, 339; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 256. Numerous other sources place Nūḥ's accession after his father's death without giving precise dates.

42 In addition to al-Thaʿālibī, see Ibn al-Nadīm (above, note 23); Ibn al-Athīr (*Kāmil*, vii, 301/B 401, 402 f.); Mīrkhwānd, *Tārikh-i rawḍat-i ṣafā*, Tehran, 1338–1339, iv, 44 = id., *Histoire des Samanides*, M. Defrémery, tr., Paris, 1847, 141.

43 Cf. al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm*, M.J. de Goeje, ed., Leiden, 1906,

of al-Muṣʿabī (and al-Jayhānī?) and the onset of Naṣr's illness, but al-Nasafī was left alive, and so presumably was Ibn Sawāda. According to al-Thaʿālibī, the Ismailis were still sufficiently well entrenched at the court at the time of Naṣr's death to try to convert Nūḥ. It was only after his accession that Nūḥ began to take action against them, as several sources make clear,[44] and only then that the missionaries were executed: Ibn al-Athīr places al-Nasafī's death in 331/943 without knowing anything about the wider context.[45] Numerous modern scholars place it in 332/944, on what basis we do not know.[46] Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī places it in 333/944–945, as mentioned above.[47]

Al-Thaʿālibī correctly identifies Nūḥ's religious mentor as al-Ḥākim al-Jalīl, alias Abū ʾl-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sulamī, a Ḥanafī scholar and *qāḍī* of Bukhārā who was appointed | vizier after Nūḥ's accession.[48] 48
He performed disastrously as vizier and ended up, like al-Muṣʿabī, by falling foul of the troops who killed him on Rabīʿ II, 334 or Jumādā I, 335 (November–December 943 or 946).[49] According to Ibn al-Nadīm, Nūḥ arranged a public debate in which the Ismailis were defeated, but al-Thaʿālibī denies it. According

337.13, where Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. ʿUzayr appears as Nūḥ's first vizier, suggesting that Nūḥ had inherited him from his father; the first vizier he appointed himself was al-Ḥākim al-Jalīl (below, note 48). For the possibility that Ibn ʿUzayr was an Ismaili, see below, section II(d).

44 Cf. al-Thaʿālibī above ("When al-Saʿīd died and his son al-Ḥamīd took his place"); Ibn al-Nadīm (above, note 23); Rashīd al-Dīn in Stern, 'Missionaries', 232 = 229.

45 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 302/B 404.

46 Stern, 'Missionaries', 221; W. Madelung, 'Das Imamat in der frühen ismailitischen Lehre', *Der Islam* 37, 1961, 102; R.N. Frye, *Bukhara, the Medieval Achievement*, 2nd edition, Costa Mesa, Calif., 1996, 56 (first published 1965); *EI²*, s.v. 'al-Nasafī' (Poonawala); F. Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlis, Their History and Doctrines*, Cambridge, 1990, 123; H. Halm, *Das Reich des Mahdi*, Munich, 1991, 261.

47 Nasafī, *Qand*, 88. We assume this to be the correct date.

48 Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, viii, 187 ff. (s.v. 'al-shahīd'); also Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 337; Gardīzī, *Taʾrīkh*, Qazwīnī, ed., 24; Ḥabībī, ed., 339; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 301/B 403. He appears as Abū Dharr in Narshakhī, *Bukhārā*, 132 = 97. Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī gives the *qāḍī* a collaborator by the name of Abū Ḥafṣ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-ʿIjlī (*Qand*, 88), identified as a Bukhāran jurist, *mushīr al-mamlaka* and prosecutor of a *dahrī* in a story of how the Chinese came to send an embassy to Naṣr II in 327/938–939 (al-Rashīd b. al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-Dhakhāʾir waʾl-tuḥaf*, M. Ḥamīd Allāh, ed., Kuwait, 1959, 140).

49 Samʿānī has the first date (*Ansāb*, viii, 191, where he is al-Ḥākim al-Shahīd and a great hero); the second is given by Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 345/B 459; and Mīrkhwānd, *Dastūr al-wuzarāʾ*, S. Nafīsī, ed., Tehran, 1317, 109. For a detailed account, see Barthold, *Turkestan*, 257 f. (where the date is given as Jan. 947).

to him, it was in a private exchange that he defeated al-Nasafī's envoy, and he refused al-Nasafī's last-minute request for a public debate.[50] Public or private, it is after this defeat that al-Nasafī is put to death according to both Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Thaʿālibī.

Al-Thaʿālibī says nothing about a purge (it is Maḥmūd of Ghazna who eradicates Ismailis in his account), and Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī only knows of a vendetta against the Ismailis on the part of the *raʾīs* Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd b. Ibrāhīm.[51] It stands to reason that Nūḥ and his scholar vizier should have taken action too, but they seem to have done so in a more protracted and less systematic manner than Ibn al-Nadīm and above all Niẓām al-Mulk would have it, for many real or alleged Ismailis appear in high positions after Nūḥ's accession and some were not affected by the purge at all.[52] There were still Ismailis in the Samanid administration under Nūḥ II (365–387/976–97), when Ibn Sīnā's father was among them.[53]

(c) *The Second Episode*

According to Niẓām al-Mulk, the Ismailis made a second bid for power fifteen years into the reign of Manṣūr I, known as al-Sadīd (350–365/961–76). The two
49 missionaries this time were Abū 'l-Faḍl | Zangurzbardījī and ʿAtīq. They built up their power for a long time, secretly putting their co-religionists into influential positions until (the secrecy notwithstanding) people in far-off places began to think that the whole court had become Bāṭinī. "Most of your nobles, courtiers and officials have adopted the religion of the Qarmaṭīs; both great and small have joined in it, and they are planning to revolt", Alptegin wrote to Manṣūr. The Ismailis managed to have the vizier, Abū ʿAlī Balʿamī, and the general, Baktuzun, thrown into jail but both were eventually released thanks to the intervention of the *qāḍī* Abū Aḥmad Marghazī, who is the hero of the story along with Alptegin, the *sipahsālār* at the time. A public debate was arranged in which the Ismailis were defeated. The missionaries were lashed and died in jail, and a general persecution of Ismailis followed.[54]

The second bid for power is described as a better planned and more prolonged affair than the first, but for some reason it hardly ever gets a mention

50 Cf. further below, end of section III(a).

51 Nasafī, *Qand*, 88, 306.

52 Cf. ʿAlī Zarrād, Abū Manṣūr al-Ṣāghānī, Jayhānī, Bakr b. Mālik, and perhaps also Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. ʿUzayr (below, section II(d), nos. 5, 6, 14, 17).

53 W.E. Gohlman, ed. and tr., *The Life of Ibn Sina*, Albany, N.Y., 1974, 16 f. = 17 f.

54 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 299–305 = 227–233 (ch. 46, ##22–30).

in the modern literature.[55] Deleting it from the record is probably right, but we do need to know why.

Manṣūr I ruled from 350 to 365, so if the second episode occurred in the fifteenth year of his reign, as Niẓām al-Mulk says, it should be placed in 365, the year in which he died. But by 365 two of the key figures in the story had long been dead. Alptegin, who appears as a staunch supporter of the regime, was *sipahsālār* under Nūḥ I (331–343) and his son ʿAbd al-Mālik (343–350), but died in a state of semi-revolt at Ghazna in 352.[56] Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṭūsī, who figures as the leading Ismaili in the story, briefly replaced him as *sipahsālār* in 349 and died in battle in 350, very much as Niẓām al-Mulk describes it, but not in 365.[57] If there | was a second Ismaili bid for power, it will 50
thus have occurred *c*. 348–350,[58] however Niẓām al-Mulk may have arrived at his peculiar date.

But if there was such a bid, it is strange that it was not masterminded by the leaders of the Khurasani mission at the time, that is al-Nasafī's son Masʿūd (nicknamed Dihqān) and Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī,[59] but rather by two otherwise unknown missionaries. Moreover, a suspicious amount of the information about the second episode duplicates the first. Thus the converts include the *ḥājib-i khāṣṣ* Aytāsh in the first episode, the *ḥājib-i buzurg* Manṣūr b. Bāyqarā in the second.[60] Ḥasan Malik, governor of Īlāq and one of the king's *khawāṣṣ* who is executed as an Ismaili in the first episode, reappears in the second as a resident at the capital and the commander against Alptegin, without apparently converting this time round (unless he is identical with the Saʿīd/Abū

55 Both Barthold (*Turkestan*, 253–257, 262–263) and Stern ('Missionaries', 220 ff.) somehow missed it. Hence presumably the fact that later scholars such as Frye (*Bukhara*, 56), Daftary (*Ismāʿīlīs*, 123), Halm (*Reich des Mahdi*, 259–262), and P. Walker (*Early Philosophical Shiism*, Cambridge, 1993, 16) all narrate the first episode on the basis of Niẓām al-Mulk without any indication, or even explicit denial, that anything like it ever happened again. The second episode is briefly mentioned in Gohlman, *Life of Ibn Sina*, 120, note 11, but the only discussions we know are Treadwell, 'Political History', 200–205 (superseded by the present paper), and E. Daniel, 'The Samanid "Translations" of Ṭabarī', paper presented at the International Conference on the Life and Works of al-Ṭabarī, University of St. Andrews, 1995 (cited in J.S. Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, Edinburgh, 1999, 26 f.).

56 C.E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, Beirut, 1973, 38.

57 Barthold, *Turkestan*, 262 f.

58 Similarly Daniel, 'Translations' (in Meisami, *Historiography*, 26).

59 Cf. Stern, 'Missionaries', 220–222. We have no death date for either, but Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī died after 361 (Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 18).

60 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 288, 299 = 219, 228 (ch. 46, ##8, 22).

Saʿīd Malik who is said to have done so).[61] A Jayhānī figures on the Ismaili side on both occasions.[62] A *sipahsālār* and a *qāḍī* take action against the heretics in both stories, and the *qāḍī* declines an offer of the vizierate in both (though al-Ḥākim al-Jalīl eventually accepted it).[63] A public debate in which the Ismailis are defeated also figures in both episodes, and in both this serves as a signal for purges which completely eradicate Ismailism from Khurasan and Transoxania.[64]

On top of that, there is a curious inconsistency in the story. The Ismailis build up their power at the centre, but all the action is in the provinces, partly in Ṭālaqān, where the Qarāmiṭa were 'committing murders and other crimes', partly in Farghāna, Khujand and Kāsān, where the Qarāmiṭa were urging the 'White-clothed ones' (i.e. Khurramīs) to revolt, and partly at Ṭūs, where Abū Manṣūr b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq was killed. Niẓām al-Mulk explains that
51 the Ismailis | intended to capture the king before moving on to the conquest of Transoxania,[65] but he does not mention any action in the capital at all. It sounds as if his story was really about provincial disturbances.

Finally, the death of Abū Manṣūr b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq, which is the climax of the story, was undoubtedly a major event in actual fact, but what did it have to do with Ismailism? Not a single source apart from Niẓām al-Mulk identifies this man, famed for his role in the creation of the *Shāhnāma*, as an Ismaili. He may have been an Imami, and he did ally himself with the (Shiite) Būyids on two occasions, the second being the year in which he died.[66] To Niẓām al-Mulk this may have been tantamount to espousing Ismailism; but more probably, we have here another case of duplication. The converts in the first episode include Abū Manṣūr al-Ṣāghānī, probably a brother of Abū ʿAlī al-Ṣāghānī, a *sipahsālār* who rebelled against Nūḥ I.[67] The most prominent convert in the second episode

61 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 288, 295, 299, 301 = 219, 224, 228, 229 (ch. 46, ##9, 17, 22, 23).

62 See below, section (d).

63 Cf. al-Ḥākim al-Jalīl in Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, viii, 188.3; Abū Aḥmad in Niẓām al-Mulk, 302 = 230 (ch. 46, #26).

64 Niẓām al-Mulk softens the inconsistency by adding, in the first story, that if any survived, they dared not show themselves. "Thus the sect remained concealed in Khurasan" (*Siyar*, 295 f. =224, ch. 46, #17).

65 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 300 = 228 (chs 4–6, #22).

66 Cf. Ibn Bābūya, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-riḍā*, M. al-Ḥusaynī al-Lājawardī, ed., Tehran, n.d., ii, 279, 285 f., where he is a devotee of al-Riḍā's shrine (we owe this reference to Parvaneh Pourshariati); V. Minorsky, 'The Older Preface to the Shāh Nāma', in *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, Rome, 1956, ii, 164 f.

67 See below, section (d).

is Abū Manṣūr b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṭūsī, a *sipahsālār* who rebelled against Manṣūr I. According to Jūzjānī, Abū Manṣūr b. ʿUzayr, vizier to ʿAbd al-Malik, was a convert to Ismailism along with Bakr b. Mālik, a *sipahsālār* who was assassinated with official blessing.[68] Jūzjānī further claims that the *sipahsālār* Abū ʿAlī Sīmjūr, who rebelled under Nūḥ II b. Manṣūr, converted to Ismailism under the influence of the very Qarāmiṭa of Ṭālaqān who appear as allies of Abū Manṣūr b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq of Ṭūs in Niẓām al-Mulk's second episode.[69] Clearly, it is the same story going round and round. The only occasion on which the constellation of Abū Manṣūr, Abū ʿAlī, the rebellious *sipahsālār*, and Ismailism is likely to be correct is the first.[70]

The story of the second Ismaili bid for power was probably triggered by provincial disturbances caused, in 348–350, by Ismailis and/or Khurramīs. To Niẓām al-Mulk the distinction was academic. Either way it will have struck him (or his sources) as natural to connect | the disturbances with the problems 52
posed at the time by the *sipahsālār*, especially as the latter's *kunya* conjured up a convert. If this convert was an Ismaili, there must have been a major plot to subvert the Samanid state from within: Sunnis were for ever suspecting the existence of such plots. The suspicion will have generated details of the alleged plot by duplication of the first episode, with due revision of the names and other changes to fit the later circumstances. Not knowing that Nūḥ I had been succeeded by ʿAbd al-Malik I, Niẓām al-Mulk completed his fictionalisation of history by placing the episode in the fifteenth year of Nūḥ's second successor, Manṣūr I.

(d) *The Converts*

The sources are agreed that Ismailism appealed strongly to the Samanid elite: the proselytes included 'kings', leading generals, and 'the headmen of the towns, potentates, squires and leading scribes of the bureaux' (*ruʾasāʾ al-bilād waʾl-salāṭīn waʾl-dahāqīn wa-aʿyān al-kataba fī ʾl-dawāwīn*).[71] Ismailis may have dominated the court for a full seven years, from al-Jayhānī II's rise to the vizierate in 326/937–938 to the execution of the missionaries in 333/944–945. The claim that the life of the headman Saʿīd b. Ibrāhīm was spent fighting Ismaili

68 Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i-nāṣirī*, ʿA.-Ḥ. Ḥabībī, ed., Kābul, 1328, 251; H.G. Raverty, tr., New Delhi, 1970 (first published 1881), i, 40. See also below, section II(d).

69 Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i nāṣirī*, 254 = 46 f.; cf. 253 = 44, where we are told that Abū ʿAlī Sīmjūr controlled Ṭūs.

70 See below, section II(d).

71 Thaʿālibī (above, I, #460); Ibn al-Nadīm (above, note 23); Nasafī, *Qand*, 88.

fanaticism (*afnā ʿumrahu fī taʿaṣṣub al-qarāmiṭa*) suggests that Ismailism was a major force for a good deal longer, if not perhaps at the court.[72] We hear of one scholar who was killed in Isfījāb in the time of the above-mentioned headman *fī taʿaṣṣub al-qarāmiṭa*; and the headman was himself hauled before the court, as has been seen.[73] Altogether, there can be no doubt that the spread of Ismailism in Samanid Transoxania was a development of major importance.

Only Niẓām al-Mulk and al-Thaʿālibī provide us with the actual names of converts, however. There is no overlap between their lists: Niẓām al-Mulk's names are drawn from the intimate circle of the Samanid court, while al-Thaʿālibī only lists 'kings', as befits the fact that he is concerned with perils to which kings are prone. Neither list comes across as particularly reliable, in so
53 far as it can be checked | (many of the converts mentioned by Niẓām al-Mulk are unknown) but then the lists will have been based largely on guesswork, for conversion was not a public act and most proselytes will have hidden their convictions. False denunciations must have abounded.

Of the converts mentioned by Niẓām al-Mulk in the first episode, nothing further is known of (1) Abū Bakr Nakhshabī, a boon companion of the amir who was killed in the purge; (2) Ashʿath, a private secretary and boon companion of the amir whose sister was married to Abū Manṣūr al-Ṣāghānī (below, no. 6) and who was also killed in the purge; (3) Aytāsh, the private chamberlain (*ḥājib-i khāṣṣ*) and (4) Ḥasan Malik, a governor of Īlāq and intimate of the amir who was also executed, but who nonetheless reappears in the second episode.[74]

But of (5) ʿAlī Zarrād, a private steward (*wakīl khāṣṣ*), we learn from Miskawayh that he was one of the generals and leading men under Nūḥ, who sent him to negotiate about tribute with ʿImād al-Dawla at Rayy in 334/945–946.[75] If he was an Ismaili, it does not seem to have affected his career. Of (6) Abū Manṣūr al-Ṣāghānī, we are told that he was an army inspector (*ʿāriḍ*) married to the sister of Ashʿath (above, no. 2) and that he was executed along with him.[76] The chances are that he was the brother of Abū ʿAlī b. al-Muḥtāj al-Ṣāghānī, who

72 Nasafī, *Qand*, 88.

73 Nasafī, *Qand*, 89, no. 131; above, note 28. *Taʿaṣṣub al-qarāmiṭa* seems to be Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī's standard expression for the Ismaili interlude.

74 Cf. above, note 61.

75 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 288 = 219 (ch. 46, #9); Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam* in *The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate*, D.S. Margoliouth and H.F. Amedroz, ed. and tr., Oxford, 1920–1921, ii, 101, 102 = v, 106, 108 (ʿAlī b. Mūsā, known as al-Zarrār).

76 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 288 = 218 (ch. 46, #8).

was *sipahsālār* under Naṣr and initially also under Nūḥ.[77] In 333/944–945 Nūḥ subjected Abū ʿAlī to a new *ʿāriḍ* chosen by al-Ḥākim al-Jalīl (in replacement of Abū Manṣūr?) and assigned the military list to someone else; and in 334/945–946 he dismissed Abū ʿAlī altogether, thereby provoking a revolt which almost cost him his throne.[78] In the same year, Miskawayh says, the news arrived in Iraq that "Nūḥ, the ruler of Khurasan, had arrested Abū ʿAlī b. Muḥtāj's brothers and killed some of them".[79] It will | have been on this occasion that Abū Manṣūr 54
was executed. Miskawayh says nothing about the charge of Ismailism, but he was a distant observer and one would be inclined to believe Niẓām al-Mulk here, for if the charge had been made up to justify the removal of the Muḥtājids, the obvious person to direct it at would have been Abū ʿAlī himself. It is possible that the brothers would have been executed even if they had not been Ismailis, but given the timing of Nūḥ's moves and the explicit mention of al-Ḥākim al-Jalīl's involvement, it does look as if Ismailism was a factor in the downfall of this family.

Most of the men on Niẓām al-Mulk's list of converts in the second episode are also unknown, and he himself supplies less information about them. This holds true of (7) Abū 'l-ʿAbbās Jarrāḥ, (8) Abū Saʿīd Malik, except that he may be identical with Ḥasan Malik, as mentioned above,[80] (9) Jaʿfar, (10) Khumārtigīn and (11) Takīnak (or Bakīnak).[81] We do have a fair amount of information on (12) Abū Manṣūr (Muḥammad) b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq, but he does not seem to have been an Ismaili, as discussed already. Of (13) Manṣūr b. Bāyqarā (or Bā'iqrā), *ḥājib-i buzurg* of Manṣūr I according to Niẓām al-Mulk,[82] we know that he was a man of prominence under Manṣūr's predecessor,[83] and also that he served as *ḥājib* under Manṣūr himself;[84] but by Manṣūr's time the events behind the

77 Barthold, *Turkestan*, 254, n. 1, suggests that he was a son rather than a brother of Abū ʿAlī, which is chronologically less plausible. For the Muḥtājids, see C.E. Bosworth, 'The Rulers of Chaghāniyān in Early Islamic Times', *Iran* 19, 1981, 1–20; id. in *EI²*, s.v. 'Muḥtād̲jids'.

78 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 333 f., 344/B 444, 458 f.; Bosworth, 'Rulers of Chaghāniyān', 6–9.

79 Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, ii, 100 = v, 105.

80 Cf. above, note 61.

81 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 299 = 223 (ch. 46, #22).

82 Nikm al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 299, cf. also 300, 301 = 223, 229 (ch. 46, ##22, 23).

83 He was sent with the insignia of government to Abū Manṣūr b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq on the latter's appointment to Khurasan in 349 (Gardīzī, *Taʾrīkh*, Qazwīnī, ed., 31; Ḥabībī, ed., 353).

84 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 338.4. For copper coins struck in Farghāna in the later 350s which identify him as *ḥājib*, see B.D. Kochnev, 'Tiurki v udel'noĭ sisteme Samanidskoĭ Fergany (x v.)', in *Materialy k etnicheskoĭ istorii naseleniia Sredneĭ Azii*, V.P. Alekseev, ed., Tashkent, 1986, 71.

alleged second episode were over, so either he was not an Ismaili after all or else Ismailism was perfectly compatible with high office even at so late a date.

That leaves us with (14) Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Jayhānī. There are three Jayhānī viziers in Samanid history, a father, a son and a grandson. The first is Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, who was vizier to Naṣr b. Aḥmad from about
55 301/913–914 until his death in 313/925.[85] | He was a fierce Shuʿūbī,[86] a *zindīq* in the sense of a Manichaean dualist,[87] and probably the Jayhānī who patronised the Gnostic preacher (Ibn) al-Kayyāl.[88] When he died, the Bukhārans stoned his coffin and refused to pray over him.[89] The second Jayhānī is Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. Muḥammad, who was vizier to Naṣr from 326/937–938 until he was succeeded by al-Muṣʿabī in 330/941–942, or at an earlier date. He is the Jayhānī said by al-Thaʿālibī to have been an Ismaili convert (or at least sympathiser) and by others to have patronised al-Kayyāl.[90] The third is Abū ʿAbdallāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad: he is the Jayhānī who appears as an Ismaili in Niẓām al-Mulk's second episode.[91] Given the heretical views of his father and grandfather the claim is highly plausible, but it may of course have been on that very basis that Niẓām al-Mulk made it. If this Jayhānī was indeed an Ismaili, he was among those who got away with it, for he was appointed vizier by Manṣūr I in 365/975–976[92] and stayed on under Nūḥ II, when he asked to be excused on grounds of age; he was dismissed in Rabīʿ II, 367/November–December 977.[93]

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85 Thus Ibn Ẓāfir, *Akhbār al-duwal al-islāmiyya*, MS, Ambrosiana (Milan), Arab. G6, fol. 126[a]; chapter on the Samanids ed. Treadwell ('Political History', 333–352), 344: he died as vizier in Jumādā II, 313, after serving for twelve years. But the end of his vizierate is placed in 310/922–923 in *EI*[2], s.vv. 'al-Djayhānī' (supplement; Pellat), 'al-Kayyāl' (Madelung).

86 Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa'l-muʾānasa*, A. Amīn and A. al-Zayn, eds, Beirut, n.d., i, 78–90. He does not specify which of the Jayhānīs he has in mind, but Muḥammad b. Aḥmad is the only one to answer to the description of *adīb*. For his books, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 153 = i, 302 (where his *ism* is reversed).

87 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 401–409 = ii, 804; cf. 153.10 = i, 303 (s.v. 'al-Balkhī', where his *kunya* is wrongly given as Abū ʿAlī).

88 *EI*[2], s.v. 'al-Kayyāl' (Madelung); cf. further below, section III(b).

89 Ibn Ẓāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 126[a] (Treadwell, ed., 344).

90 *EI*[2], s.vv. 'al-Djayhānī' (supplement; Pellat); 'al-Kayyāl' (Madelung); above, note 32.

91 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 299 = 228 (ch. 46, #22).

92 Ibn Ẓāfir, *Duwal*, fol, 128[a] (Treadwell, ed., 347); Gardīzī, *Taʾrīkh*, Qazwīnī, ed., 36; Ḥabībī, ed., 361; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 263 f.

93 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 338.8; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 130[b] (Treadwell, ed., 349); Narshakhī,

Al-Thaʿālibī's list is more problematic than Niẓām al-Mulk's, for although every person he mentions is well known, only two of them (apart from al-Muṣʿabī and al-Jayhānī) are rumoured elsewhere to have been Ismailis. Did al-Thaʿālibī have better information and/or | less discretion than others about 56
people's religious inclinations, or was he simply good at picking up malicious gossip? We do not know.

His list consists of five men. The first is (15) Abū ʿAlī (Muḥammad) b. Ilyās, the founder of the Ilyāsid dynasty in Kirmān (320–357/932–68), who does not seem to figure as an Ismaili in any other source.[94] The second is (16) Abū ʿAlī b. Sīmjūr, who could be either Ibrāhīm b. Sīmjūr (d. 336/948) or Muḥammad al-Muẓaffar the Sīmjūrid (d. 387/997). Both served as *sipahsālār*s and governors of Khurasan, the former under Naṣr II and Nūḥ I, the latter under Nūḥ II.[95] The charge is odd whoever is meant. It is true that the later Sīmjūrid appears as an Ismaili in Juzjānī, and that he adopted the possibly Ismaili title *al-muʾayyad min al-samāʾ*; but the nature of the title is highly uncertain, and Juzjānī is probably confusing him with Abū ʿAlī al-Ṣāghānī and his brother, as has been seen.[96] Al-Samʿānī depicts the entire Sīmjūrid family as traditionalist in orientation, singing its praises in the most fervent terms.[97]

The third name on al-Thaʿālibī's list is (17) Bakr b. Mālik, a Turkish general who was *sipahsālār* under Nūḥ and his successor and who was assassinated in Bukhārā in 345/956–957.[98] Juzjānī claims that he and the vizier Abū Manṣūr

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Bukhārā, 136 = 99 f.; Yāqūt, *Muʾjam al-udabāʾ*, A.F. Rifāʿī, ed., Cairo 1936–1938, iv, 192 (where he is treated as identical with his namesake and grandfather, the first Jayhānī vizier who was famed as a geographer).

94 Cf. C.E. Bosworth, 'The Banū Ilyās of Kirmān', in C.E. Bosworth, ed., *Iran and Islam*, Edinburgh, 1971, 110.

95 Cf. C.E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, New York, 1996, 175; *EI*[2], s.v. 'Sīmd̲jūrids' (Bosworth) and the literature cited there.

96 Above, note 69 (possibly, this was also how Abū ʿAlī b. Ilyās became an Ismaili). For the title, mentioned by the chronicles without comment and numismatically attested, see W.L. Treadwell, '*Shāhānshāh* and *al-Malik al-Muʾayyad*: The Legitimation of Power in Samanid and Buyid Iran', in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, J.W. Meri and F. Daftary, eds, London, 2003.

97 Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, vii, 351–355.

98 Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 337.12; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 379/B 505; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Duwal*, fol. 127[b] (Treadwell, ed., 346); Gardīzī, *Taʾrīkh*, Qazwīnī, ed., 31; Ḥabībī, ed., 352. He and his father Mālik b. Sunkurtegīn(?) had been governors of Naṣrābād in Ferghāna from 336/947–948 to, apparently, Bakr's death. Cf. E.A. Davidovich, 'Vladeteli Naṣrabada (po numizmaticheskim dannym)', *Kratkie soobshcheniia instituta istorii material'noĭ kul'tury* 61, 1956, 107–113. His

Muḥammad b. ʿUzayr, who was arrested about the same time, were converts to Ismailism,[99] but there is reason to suspect confusion with Abū ʿAlī al-Ṣāghānī
57 and his brother | yet again.[100] Certainly, the families of the alleged converts do not seem to have been disgraced: Abū Manṣūr's son, ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿUzayr, was vizier on several occasions under Nūḥ II,[101] and members of Bakr b. Mālik's family appear in the retinue of the *sipahsālār* Tāsh in 371/981–982.[102] So either the charge was false or else we have further examples here of high-ranking Ismailis who were allowed to stay in place.

Al-Thʿālibī's fourth and fifth converts are (18) Ibn Bānū, alias Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khalaf b. Layth, and (19) Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Sijzī, two Saffārids who between them ruled Sīstān from 311/923 to 359/970.[103] Ṭāhir does not seem to figure as an Ismaili elsewhere. As regards Ibn Bānū, Ibn al-Dawādārī mentions an Ismaili missionary named as *Ibn Bābawayh ṣāḥib Sijistān*,[104] which one might read as 'Ibn Bānawayh, ruler of Sīstān'. It is however more likely that it should be read as 'Ibn Bandāna, missionary of Sīstān', i.e. Abū Yaʿqub al-Sijistānī.[105] Even so, it is clear from the story of Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī's alleged book about the Qarāmiṭa that Ibn Bānū was rumoured to be an Ismaili. Ibn Ḥibbān is said to have written this book for al-Muṣʿabī in return for the judgeship of Samarqand and later to have used it again to secure appointments from 'Ibn Bābū' in Sīstān.[106] Ibn Bānū and his son Khalaf (r. with

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father, known as *ṣāḥīb Farghāna* to al-Rashīd b. al-Zubayr (*Dhakhāʾir*, 141), appears as commander-in-chief of a Samanid expedition to Jurjān already in 333/944–945 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 3442/B 443).

99 See above, note 68. For his vizierate and arrest, see Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 338.13; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Duwal*, 127b (ed. Treadwell, 346); Gardīzī, *Taʾrīkh*, Qazwīnī, ed., 31; Ḥabībī, ed., 352.

100 Cf. above, note 68.

101 Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh*, 136 = 100; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ix, 19/B 27; Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 338.9; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Duwal*, fols. 130a–b (Treadwell, ed., 349); Barthold, *Turkestan*, 265, 272. For his end under Manṣūr II, see Gardīzī, *Taʾrīkh*, Qazwīnī, ed., 45 f. (read ʿUzayr for ʿAzīz); Ḥabībī, ed., 377 f.

102 Al-ʿUtbī in al-Manīnī, *al-Fatḥ al-wahbī ʿalā taʾrīkh Abī Naṣr al-ʿUtbī*, Cairo 1286, i, 105.

103 C.E. Bosworth, 'The Ṭahirids and Ṣaffārids', in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, iv, R.N. Frye, ed., Cambridge, 1975, 131–133; id., *The History of the Saffarids of Sistan and the Maliks of Nimruz*, Costa Mesa, Calif., 1994, 282 ff., 302 ff. Ibn Bānū is written Ibn Bānūā with a final *alif*, presumably for closure on the model of the third person plural.

104 Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al-ghurar*, vi, Ṣ.-D. al-Munajjid, ed., Cairo, 1961, 95.

105 For his nickname Bandāna (*panba-dāna*) and appearance in the sources as *ṣāḥib Sijistān*, see Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 17.

106 Yāqūt, *Buldān*, i, 620.6; cf. above, note 28.

Ṭāhir 352–359/963–70; sole ruler 359–393/970–1003) were famed as patrons of philosophy,[107] and it was perhaps their interest in philosophy which generated rumours of Ismailism at the Sīstānī court. | One might, in that case, wonder 58
why Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad appears on the list whereas Khalaf is excluded, but for Khalaf's exclusion at least there is a good explanation: he was the ruler who killed Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī.[108]

III Samanid Ismailism

(a) *Al-Thaʿālibī's Picture*

Al-Thaʿālibī knows Ismailism as a philosophical rather than a messianic movement. Its adherents are *aṣḥāb al-ṭabāʾiʿ wa'l-nujūm* who call the prophets *aṣḥāb al-nawāmīs wa'l-ḥawā'ij* and who speak about the rational soul: they talk philosophical drivel, in other words, not nonsense about the Mahdi. He directs a number of stereotyped charges at them: they do not believe in prophethood, they preach antinomianism as an excuse for wild indulgence in pleasures, and they envelop their movement in a cloak of secrecy to hide its utter depravity. For all that, he is quite well informed about them.

Iranian Ismailism became a philosophical creed at the hands of men such as Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/934), al-Nasafī (d. 333/944–945) and Abū 'l-Haytham al-Jurjānī (early fourth/tenth century).[109] The philosophers did call the prophets 'lawgivers' (Greek sg. *nomothetēs*; Arabic sg. *ṣāḥib/wāḍiʿ al-nāmūs/al-sharīʿa*),[110] but contrary to what al-Thaʿālibī claims, they did not normally deny the reality of prophethood. What they did do, apart from thinking that they could explain its mechanics, was rather to credit prophethood with a somewhat mundane, socio-political role. Prophets, they said, were people who could reformulate philosophical insights as myths and images intelligible to ordinary people and who used this gift to lay | down the legal and 59

107 D.M. Dunlop, 'Philosophical Discussions in Sijistan in the 10th Century AD', *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik und Islamwissenschaften, Göttingen, 1974*, A. Dietrich, ed., Göttingen, 1976. The Ibn Ḥibbān mentioned at p. 112 as a participant in such discussions at Ibn Bānūya's court was presumably Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (cf. the preceding note).

108 Rashīd al-Dīn in Stern, 'Missionaries', 228; cf. Walker, *Early Philosophical Shiism*, 17.

109 Stern, 'Missionaries', 219 f.; id., 'Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī on Persian Religion', in his *Studies*, 31 f.; G. Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans*, Tehran and Paris, 1964, 24 f., and the literature cited there.

110 But the expression *aṣḥāb al-ḥawā'ij* is a puzzle to us: the reference may be to the needs which cause humans to form societies, necessitating the laws that prophets bring.

moral rules by which societies were regulated. As founders of polities, they were extremely important, for there could be no socio-political order without them (or so it was claimed);[111] and without such order, mankind could not flourish either in this world or the next. Both Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī wrote books affirming the existence of prophethood in this vein.[112] Like the philosophers they saw prophetic law as a mundane instrument of personal discipline and social management. Prayer, purity and alms were the forms of Muḥammad's governance (*siyāsat al-ʿāmma*), as al-Sijistānī put it;[113] prophets guided the conformists (*ahl al-taqlīd*), as the dissident missionary Aḥmad (b.) al-Kayyāl said.[114] For the higher truth one had to turn to the imams, the expounders of the inner meaning of things (*bāṭin*), originally Gnostic and now philosophical, on which salvation depended. One could avoid downgrading Muḥammad by casting him as the bringer of both the law and the interpretation (*taʾwīl*) by which its inner meaning was revealed, as did al-Sijistānī.[115] But the law itself was still viewed in a utilitarian vein. Its truth was relative, and one day it would be abrogated by the Mahdi.

Al-Thaʿālibī does not mention the future abrogation of the law. According to him, it was in the here and now that the missionaries promised to free their converts from the 'slavery of the law' (*riqq al-sharīʿa*) and to liberate them from 'the shackles of religious observance' (*isār al-diyāna*), saying that they would be able to abandon 'prayer and other acts of worship'. The missionaries did not say that the Mahdi would enable people to do so at the end of times. Again, al-Thaʿālibī comes across as well informed. The Ismailis did speak of the law as chains, and of its subjects as enslaved (*mustaʿbad*), though they
60 did not always mean it in a negative vein;[116] and they did have | the *ʿibādāt* in mind. It was the worship of God through physical movements and actions that they found onerous, not the laws of marriage, divorce, inheritance, murder

111 The fallacy of this argument was noted by Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, F. Rosenthal, tr., Princeton, 1967, i, 92 f.: most peoples have had political organisation even though they have not had prophets.

112 Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, S. al-Ṣāwī, ed., Tehran, 1977; Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb Ithbāt al-nubuwwāt*, ʿA. Tāmir, ed., Beirut, 1966.

113 Sijistānī, *Ithbāt*, 181 f.

114 Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal waʾl-niḥal*, W. Cureton, ed., London, 1846, 140 (M.S. Kaylānī, ed., Cairo, 1961, i, 183) = id., *Livre des religions et des sectes*, D. Gimaret, J. Jolivet, and G. Monnot, trs, UNESCO, 1986, i, 529. On al-Kayyāl, see further below, section III(b).

115 Sijistānī, *Ithbāt*, 4.8–9.

116 E.g. al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-shīʿa*, H. Ritter, ed., Istanbul, 1931, 63; Rāzī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, 6.19, 7.2; Sijistānī, *Ithbāt*, 177 f.

or theft,[117] though the Mahdi would do away with them too (or most of them) when history came to an end.[118] But the entire law had to stay in place until he came, and by al-Thaʿālibī's time his coming was no longer imminent. Even by al-Nasafī's time the sense of imminence must have been waning, for the Mahdi's return had been predicted for the year 300/912–913, which had passed without incident.[119] The very fact that the Ismailis took up philosophy with such enthusiasm suggests that they needed a new approach to their faith which de-emphasized eschatology. The great collective transformation had been postponed.

The law remained in place for purposes of social control, and the masses had to obey it; but there could still be individual liberation for members of the spiritual elite who had achieved full understanding of the higher truths that the law encoded. "A section of the philosophers and a group of the Bāṭinīs claim that persons proficient in the sciences are not bound by any of the duties of servitude (*waẓāʾif al-ʿubūdiyya*), apart from guiding people", as al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992) observed, presumably in Khurasan.[120] It is to this promise of individual liberation from the law that al-Thaʿālibī refers. He is undoubtedly right that it was a major attraction of Ismailism, not because it allowed the Ismailis to lose themselves in sensual pleasure, as he so predictably thinks, but rather because it enabled them to abandon the mundane sphere of physical worship, public morality and collective welfare subsumed by the law for spiritual adventure and individual perfection. When al-Jayhānī derides the jurists as bearers of filth, his point is precisely that their concept of religion is devoid of spirituality: what did excretion and menstruation have to do with the divine?

Al-Thaʿālibī is perfectly right that the Ismailis enveloped their movement in a cloak of secrecy. They were secretive because their doctrine was radical and disclosing it was dangerous: all converts were sworn to secrecy before their initiation; nothing would be | revealed to them until they had taken 61
such an oath (*ʿahd*, *mīthāq*).[121] To all non-initiates, this showed that the doctrine must be positively evil. "Had it been a good thing, they would not have

117 Compare *Rasāʾil ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ*, Beirut, 1957, v, 306 ff., on the tyranny of the five *ḥukkām*, of which the third is the law, again mostly ritual.

118 Al-Sijistānī held that some *muʿāmalāt* were in such conformity with reason that they could not be abrogated (*Ithbāt*, 178; Madelung, 'Imamat', 108).

119 Cf. below, note 136.

120 *Kitāb al-Iʿlām fī manāqib al-Islām*, A. ʿA.-H. Ghurāb, ed., Cairo, 1967, 77 f.

121 H. Halm, 'The Ismaʿili Oath of Allegiance (*ʿahd*) and the "Sessions of Wisdom" (*majālis al-ḥikma*) in Fatimid Times', in F. Daftary, ed., *Mediaeval Ismaʿili History and Thought*, Cambridge, 1996, 91 f.

concealed it; it must certainly be directed against the religion of Islam", as they said in North Africa.[122] Al-Thaʿālibī reacts in the same way. Why were the Ismailis secretive even when they had official backing? Nūḥ commanded the obedience of the elite and the masses alike, and there was nobody above him (apart from God, who would approve if their doctrine was true), so there was no reason why they should not proclaim their doctrine openly. "A veil conceals abominations; you will not find anything veiling the good", Nūḥ concludes in the words of a pagan poet. Al-Thaʿālibī's only problem here is that the Ismailis do seem to have relaxed their precautionary measures under official patronage, for the missionary Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī engaged in a public disputation with the arch-heretical philosopher Abū Bakr al-Rāzī under the auspices of Mardāwīj (or an earlier governor) in Rayy,[123] and both Ibn al-Nadīm and Niẓām al-Mulk associate the Ismailis with public disputations at the Samanid court, as we have seen. It is presumably because he wants to stress their secretive nature that al-Thaʿālibī denies that a public disputation took place.[124]

(b) *Autonomous or Subservient to the Fatimids?*

Numerous sources inform us that the Ismaili mission in Khurasan was founded by the Fatimids after their rise in North Africa in 297/909. All ultimately go back to the Kufan Ibn Rizām (written before 345/956–957) and they identify the first missionary to Khurasan as Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Khādim. According to Ibn al-Dawādārī (who used Ibn Rizām in the recension of the Sharīf Akhū Muḥsin), this man was a servant of ʿUbaydallāh al-Mahdī in North Africa.[125] He was succeeded in 307/919–920 by Abū Saʿīd al-Shaʿrānī who had also been
62 sent by ʿUbaydallāh al-Mahdī according to Ibn al-Nadīm (who | used Ibn Rizām directly), though Ibn al-Dawādārī seems to disagree. According to him, al-Shaʿrānī was a convert of Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Khādim's, presumably meaning that he was a local man. In any case, al-Shaʿrānī was killed between 321/933 and 327/938–939, and his successor was al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazī, who in turn was succeeded by al-Nasafī.[126] We are clearly to take it that all four missionaries

122 Halm, 'Ismaʿili Oath', 92, citing al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, *Iftitāḥ al-daʿwa*, W. al-Qāḍī, ed., Beirut, 1970, 76.

123 Stern, 'Missionaries', 202; cf. below, note 137.

124 Cf. above, note 50.

125 Stern, 'Missionaries', 216, citing al-Maqrīzī; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, vi, 95.

126 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 239 = i, 467; Stern, 'Missionaries', 216–219, 224; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, vi, 95. Ibn al-Nadīm gives al-Shaʿrānī's year of arrival as 87 in one manuscript, as 37 in another. Dodge understands 87 as 287; Stern corrects 37 to 307. Since al-Shaʿrānī followed

were agents of the Fatimids, and we are told so again when al-Nasafī undertakes to send the dinars struck by Naṣr to al-Qā'im, the second Fatimid caliph.[127]

But there seems to be something wrong here. Why should the mission in Khurasan have been founded so late?[128] The *ḥujja*s in Salamiyya sent missionaries to Iraq, Baḥrayn, western Iran and India from the 260s/870s onwards, and one would have expected them to do so to Khurasan as well. It is moreover hard to see how al-Nasafī can have worked for the Fatimids when his doctrine was of the pre-Fatimid type that left no room for them.[129] Let us try again.

The mission in Khurasan probably started well before the rise of the Fatimids in North Africa. For one thing, al-Nasafī wrote his *Kitāb al-Maḥṣūl* early enough for it to be refuted by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who became a missionary in *c*. 300/912 and died in 322/934–935.[130] For another thing, eastern heresiographers know of a preacher by the name of Aḥmad (b.) al-Kayyāl, who came from Nīshāpūr and who was already active in 295/907–908.[131] According to al-Shahrastānī, this man had started as a missionary on behalf of a member of the | Prophet's fam- 63
ily after Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, "I think one of the hidden imams" (i.e. the *ḥujja*s in Salamiyya), who had disowned him for his heresy.[132] One wonders if there is not a recollection here of a missionary who broke with Salamiyya when 'Ubaydallāh al-Mahdī changed the doctrine in preparation for his rise to power.[133] The missionaries in southern Iraq, Baḥrayn and Yemen who broke with 'Ubaydallāh proceeded to prepare for the coming of the Mahdi on their own, and al-Kayyāl seems to have done the same, for he is said to have presented himself as the imam and *qā'im* under whom the spiritual would prevail over the corporeal and

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a man sent from Fatimid North Africa (founded 297), Dodge cannot be right. Arrival in 287 would also make him implausibly long-lived.

127 Thus Ibn al-Nadīm (above, note 23). Compare 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 'A.-K. 'Uthmān, ed., Beirut, 1966, ii, 599, where al-Nasafī is working on behalf of 'Ubaydallāh.

128 This rightly puzzled Stern, but he could not think of any evidence to the contrary ('Missionaries', 216 f.).

129 Cf. Madelung, 'Imamat', 102–106 and note 366, where Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī is the first to accept the Fatimids and the conflict with Ibn Rizām's story is noted. Daftary also presents Khurasani doctrine as pre-Fatimid, but nonetheless retains Ibn Rizām's story (*Isma'īlīs*, 122, 167 f.); and Halm cautiously accepts the story on the grounds that it cannot be disproved (*Reich*, 261).

130 Cf. Madelung, 'Imamat', 102 and note 319 thereto. Abū Ḥātim's dates are given in Stern, 'Missionaries', 190, 204.

131 Abū 'l-Ma'ālī, *Bayān al-adyān*, H. Raḍī, ed., Tehran, 1964, 67.

132 Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 138 (i, 181) = i, 526; cf. *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'al-Kayyāl' (Madelung).

133 Cf. Madelung, 'Imamat', 65–86.

the law would be abrogated. Unlike the Ismailis of Iraq and Arabia, however, he did not abrogate the *sharīʿa* by engaging in ceremonious violation of it, but rather by composing a new Qurʾān in Persian, much as the Kutāma dissidents composed a scripture in Berber when they broke with ʿUbaydallāh and raised up a Mahdi of their own in North Africa in 298/911. As an autonomous preacher, al-Kayyāl was a Gnostic who left behind books in Arabic and Persian and who was patronized by a Jayhānī, probably the first.[134] If this is accepted, the mission established by ʿUbaydallāh will have been a new one aimed at the recovery of the Khurasani constituency lost in the great schism caused by ʿUbaydallāh himself. This will be why it was founded so late.

There is in any case no doubt that Ibn Rizām is mistaken when he attaches al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazī and al-Nasafī to this mission. The Fatimid mission had its centre in Nīshāpūr, where Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Khādim and Abū Saʿīd al-Shaʿrānī resided. The movement led by al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and al-Nasafī had its headquarters in Marwarrūdh, where al-Ḥusayn resided and where Ibn Sawāda
64 was left as al-Nasafī's deputy according to Niẓām al-Mulk;[135] and the | mission at Marwarrūdh was an offshoot of Rayy, not of Nīshāpūr. Al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī had been converted by a missionary from Rayy by the name of Ghiyāth, who was active before 300/912–913.[136] Al-Ḥusayn's brother, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī, was converted by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī at Rayy between 307/919–920 and 311/924, when he was governor there.[137] We do not know who converted al-Nasafī, but he was a close associate of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and his deputy was Ibn Sawāda, who had started

134 Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 138–141 (i, 181–184) = i, 526–530; Abū ʾl-Maʿālī, *Bayān*, 67–69, who gives the vizier's *ism* as Muḥammad b. Muḥammad, thus making him al-Jayhānī II. In view of his dates, Madelung is undoubtedly right that al-Jayhānī I is meant (*EI²*, s.v. 'al-Kayyāl'); cf. above, section II(d), no. 14. For the Berbers, see Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Kitāb al-Bayān al-mughrib*, G.S. Colin and E. Levi-Provençal, ed., Leiden, 1948–1951, i, 166 f.; also *Kitāb al-ʿUyūn wa'l-ḥadāʾiq*, iv, ʿU. al-Saʿīdī, ed., Damascus, 1972–1973, 162; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Akhbār al-duwal al-munqaṭiʿa*, A. Ferré, ed., Cairo, 1972, 10; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 41/B 53. According to Nuʿmān, *Iftitāḥ*, 273, the Kutāma did violate the law, but the charges are too stereotyped to convince.

135 Stern, 'Missionaries', 218 f., 229. Daftary infers that the seat of the Fatimid mission was moved (*Ismāʿīlīs*, 122).

136 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 284 f. = 216 (ch. 46, #3–4); Stern, 'Missionaries', 196. He disappeared when the Mahdi failed to come at the time foretold, presumably meaning the year 300 (cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, 381, in connection with the Ismailis of Baḥrayn).

137 Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 286 = 216 f. (ch. 46, #5); Stern, 'Missionaries', 196. It may have been under this man rather than Mardāwīj that Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī had his famous disputation with the philosopher Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (cf. Stern, 'Missionaries', 202).

his career as a missionary at Rayy.[138] Further, Ibn Rizām's chronology goes against him. Abū Saʿīd al-Shaʿrānī was killed between 321 and 327, when al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Marwazī supposedly took over, to be succeeded by al-Nasafī in his turn. But this does not leave much time for al-Nasafī to go off to Transoxania and convert the Samanid elite before the anti-Ismaili reaction of 330. In any case, al-Ḥusayn was probably dead by the time al-Shaʿrānī's position became vacant, for he was already a general of major importance in 287, when he governed Herat for the Samanids,[139] and the story of how he died in jail is based on events of 306 and 307.[140] His brother Aḥmad b. ʿAlī fell in battle in 311;[141] another brother, Muḥammad b. ʿAlī (known as Ṣuʿlūk), died in 316.[142] Finally, it is noteworthy that all three brothers were generals and governors (above all of Rayy), not the sort of people who normally became chief missionaries. It seems unlikely that al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī should have been a missionary in the conventional sense at all, as opposed to a staunch supporter of the cause and protector of major importance at a time when the mission had been thrown into disarray by the break with Salamiyya.

In short, al-Ḥusayn, al-Nasafī and Ibn Sawāda preached Ismailism of the 65
Rāzī type and worked independently of the Fatimids. The mission at Rayy had been founded before the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty and it remained faithful to the old doctrine when ʿUbaydallāh set about revising it: Ghiyāth prepared for the coming of the Mahdi in 300/912–913, three years after the appearance of ʿUbaydallāh al-Mahdī, to disappear when his prediction failed;[143] Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī was also an old believer;[144] and a coin struck in 343/954–955 by Wahsūdān b. Muḥammad of the Musāfirid family, who had been converted by the mission in Rayy, has a list of the imams which ends with Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl.[145] It is thus not surprising to find that al-Nasafī also affirmed the imamate of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, whose return he awaited.[146] By contrast, ʿUbaydallāh al-Mahdī dismissed Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl

138 Stern, 'Missionaries', 219, 228 (Niẓām al-Mulk and Rashīd al-Dīn).

139 Faṣīḥ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Khwāfī, *Mujmal-i faṣīḥī*, M. Farrūkh, ed., i, Mashhad, 1344, 383; Isfizārī, *Rawḍat al-jannāt fī awṣāf-i madīnat-i harāt*, M.K. Imām, ed., Tehran, 1338–1339, i, 384.

140 Cf. below, note 152.

141 Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, i, 117 = iv, 131; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 105/B 144.

142 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 121 f./B 166 f.

143 See the references given above, note 136.

144 Madelung, 'Imamat', 103–106.

145 Stern, 'Missionaries', 210–216.

146 Madelung, 'Imamat', 103.

as a mere cover name for a succession of imams culminating in himself. It was not until the reign of al-Muʿizz (341–365/952–74) that the Fatimids began to reinstate Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl as a real person, without accepting that he would return.[147] By then the Iranian Ismailis seem to have been eager for compromise, for Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī recognized the Fatimids in the qualified sense that he accepted them as deputies (*khulafāʾ*) of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, the awaited Mahdi and *qāʾim*; he did not regard them as imams in their own right.[148] This doctrine also had adherents in India, where a missionary was advised by al-Muʿizz that it was wrong.[149] The Fatimids saw themselves (and their ancestors in Salamiyya) as imams in an unbroken line of succession from ʿAlī to whoever would prove to be the last of them, and thus the Mahdi. The
66 Ismailis of Khurasan did eventually come | to accept this view. It was to "the missionary of the Egyptians" that Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) described his father as having responded,[150] and it was also to Fatimid Egypt that Nāṣir al-Dīn Khusraw (d. after 465/1072–1073) gave his allegiance.

Al-Thaʿālibī's account is valuable for confirming that the Ismailis of al-Nasafī's Khurasan were autonomous. Like Ibn al-Nadīm, he claims that Naṣr paid a large sum of money to al-Nasafī, in gold coins of enormous weight specially struck for the occasion. This is perfectly plausible, though no such coins have actually been found (the Ismaili interlude is not reflected in the Samanid coinage at all),[151] for commemorative coins of extra value were struck on other occasions, and it stands to reason that Naṣr should have contributed financially to the cause. (That he should have paid the sum as blood money, as Ibn al-Nadīm claims, is implausible, not least because al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī does

147 Madelung, 'Imamat', 70 f., 88 f.

148 Sijistānī, *Ithbāt*, 4, 186; id., *The Wellsprings of Wisdom* (*Kitāb al-Yanābiʿ*), P.E. Walker, tr., Salt Lake City, 1994, ##30, 144, with Walker's commentary at p. 131 (there would be seven such deputies); id., 'Risālat tuḥfat al-mustajībīn', in *Khams rasāʾil ismāʿīliyya*, 'A. Tāmir, ed., Salamiyya, 1956, 153.3 (several times seven). Abū Yaʿqūb probably did not acknowledge the Fatimids at all at the beginning of his career (Madelung, 'Imamat', note 366).

149 Stern, 'Heterodox Ismāʿīlism in the Time of al-Muʿizz', in his *Studies*, especially 259–261, 269 f. (reprinted with new pagination from the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 17, 1955); Madelung, 'Imamat', 110 f. Stern assumes Wahsūdān to have professed such a doctrine ('Missionaries', 215).

150 Gohlman, *Life of Ibn Sina*, 18 = 19.

151 Naṣr struck gold and silver coins in Shāsh, Samarqand, Balkh, Nīshāpūr, Āmul, Qumm, Qazwīn and other mints in the period 330–331/941–43: all bear the name of the caliph al-Muttaqī (see for example S. Lane Poole, *The Coins of the Mohammadan Dynasties in the British Museum*, ii, London, 1876, no. 346 (Shāsh 330); S.M. Stern, 'The Coins of Āmul', *Numismatic Chronicle*, 7th series, 7, 1967, no. 15 (Āmul 331)).

not seem to have died in prison.)[152] The point to note here is that al-Thaʿālibī does not present the money as earmarked for the Fatimid caliph. According to him, it was meant for "the lord of the diocese, who was the imam of that mission in their view (*ṣāḥib al-jazīra wa-huwa ʿindahum imām tilka al-daʿwa*)". The Ismailis divided the world into twelve areas of missionary activity, each known as a *jazīra* (island), and they would speak of the leader of such an area as *ṣāḥib al-jazīra*; the Ismailis of Khurasan constituted such a *jazīra* under a leader of their own.[153] Al-Thaʿālibī wrongly claims | that this leader was the imam "in 67
their view", presumably meaning in their view as opposed to ours, or perhaps in their view as opposed to that of the Fatimid Ismailis. Either way, his statement makes it clear that the Ismailis of al-Nasafī's Khurasan did not recognize any leader outside Khurasan. Their highest authority was their *ṣāḥib al-jazīra*, or in other words al-Nasafī himself. Al-Nasafī and Ibn Sawāda presumably kept the dinars struck by Naṣr II because their imam and Mahdi, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, was still in hiding. They were administering the money on his behalf. There was nowhere to send it.

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152 He rebelled against Naṣr II and was defeated by the general Aḥmad b. Sahl, who sent him to jail in Bukhārā in 306; he was freed by the vizier Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Jayhānī (thus Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 65 f./B 87 f.; cf. Stern, 'Missionaries', 218), or by the future vizier Balʿamī (thus Thaʿālibī, *Yatīma*, iv, 81). Barthold assumes that he was jailed again on a later occasion (*Turkestan*, 254n). But it seems more likely that the story rests on confusion with the fate of his captor, Aḥmad b. Sahl, who rebelled himself and died in jail in Bukhārā in 307 (Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, viii, 89/B 120)

153 That the Ismailis divided the world into twelve *jazīra*s was known already to Nawbakhtī, *Firaq*, 63 (written before 286/899). Khurasan appears as a *jazīra* in Ibn Ḥawqal (350s/960s) and Nāṣir-i Khusraw (F. Daftary, 'The Ismaili *Daʿwa* outside the Fatimid *Dawla*', in *L'Égypte Fatimide, son art et son histoire*, M. Barrucand, ed., Paris, 1999, 37). For an early attestation of the term *sāḥib al-jazīra*, see Jaʿfar b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, *Sarāʾir wa-asrār al-nuṭaqāʾ*, M. Ghālib, ed., Beirut, 1984, 251.8.

CHAPTER 11

306

What Was al-Fārābī's 'Imamic' Constitution?*

In his commentary of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* Ibn Rushd mentions a constitution said by al-Fārābī to have existed among the ancient Persians. It is labelled imamic (*imāmiyya*) and characterized as inferior to philosophically based kingship on the grounds that it combined virtuous behaviour with defective views. The passage, which probably comes from al-Fārābī's lost commentary on the *Rhetoric*,[1] is highly problematic. What follows is an attempt to work out what it may originally have meant.

The passage goes as follows: "The government that (Aristotle) mentions here is of two kinds, kingship (*ri'āsat al-malik*), which is the city where opinions and actions are based on the requirements of the theoretical sciences, and leadership of the best (*ri'āsat al-akhyār*), where only the actions are virtuous.
307 This is (the leadership) known as *al-imāmiyya*, | and it is said that it existed among the ancient Persians, as Abū Naṣr (al-Fārābī) has related".[2] Ibn Rushd repeats the statement in his paraphrase of Plato's *Republic*, which only survives in a Hebrew translation and where it runs as follows: "Cities that are virtuous in deeds alone are called *ha-mekahenot* (= *al-imāmiyya*). It has been recounted that this city, namely *ha-mekahenet*, existed among the ancient Persians".[3]

The passage is problematic in four ways. First, it distinguishes between a regime with one ruler (*ri'āsat al-malik*) and one with several (*ri'āsat al-akhyār*),

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1 M. Aouad and M. Rashed, 'Commentateurs "satisfaisants" et "non satisfaisants" de la *Rhétorique* selon Averroès', in G. Endress and J.A. Aertsen (eds), *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition*, Cologne 1999, pp. 93 f.

2 Ibn Rushd, *Talkhīs al-khaṭāba*, ed. M. Sālim, Cairo 1967, 137 f.; ed. 'A. Badawī, Kuwait and Beirut n.d., 69; ed. and tr. M. Aouad, Paris 2002, ii, 1, 8, 6 (*ad* Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1365b).

3 *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, ed. and tr. E.I.J. Rosenthal, Cambridge 1969, p. 79, line 7 (henceforth given in the form 79.7) = 205; *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, tr. R. Lerner, Ithaca and London 1974, p. 102. (Since Lerner's translation gives the pages and lines of Rosenthal's edition in the margin, references to Rosenthal will henceforth do duty for both.)

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yet makes no reference to this difference in the explanation of their nature. Secondly, 'imamic' is an odd word to choose for a regime with a plurality of rulers. Thirdly, *imāmiyya* is an even odder term to choose for an imperfect regime, whether characterized by several rulers or not. Al-Fārābī normally uses the word imam of the true king (*al-malik fī 'l-ḥaqīqa*) or first leader (*al-ra'īs al-awwal*), or in other words the philosopher king,[4] yet here he is somebody inferior to the king. The usage in Ibn Rushd's quotation jars even to non-philosophers, for it is one thing to use *mulk* in the generic or flattering sense of power in which it either is or includes the imamate and quite another to contrast the two, thereby causing the reader to equate *mulk* with godless tyranny rather than a virtuous form of government. Finally, the term *al-ru'asā' al-akhyār* is also an odd term for an imperfect regime, for al-Fārābī elsewhere uses it of one of the two forms of perfect government, namely aristocracy, as will be seen. In sum, the passage applies two terms normally reserved for the highest forms of government | (*imāmiyya*, *al-akhyār*) to a lower form of 308
government (perfect behaviour, imperfect beliefs), not, as one would have expected, to the highest form of government as represented by a single ruler or several respectively.

Ri'āsat al-akhyār = Aristocracy

In the Arabic translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachaean Ethic*, *ri'āsat al-akhyār* translates *aristokratia*,[5] and it is also the term for aristocracy in al-Fārābī's work. In his *Fuṣūl*, for example, he lists four types of virtuous government.[6] The first is kingship, in which a single ruler is so outstanding that all his acts

4 Cf. al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-milla*, ed. M. Mahdi, Beirut 1968 (tr. D. Mallet in his *Fārābī, Deux Traités Philosophiques*, Damascus 1989), § 9, on *al-a'imma al-abrār alladhīna hum al-mulūk fī 'l-haqīqa*; id., *al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. F.M. Najjār, Beirut 1964, 80.–5, 81.4; ed. Hyderabad 1346, 50 f.; partial tr. by F.M. Najjār in R. Lerner and M. Mahdi (eds), *Medieval Political Philosophy: a Sourcebook*, Glencoe 1963, 37 ("princes … past imams"); id., *Kitāb arā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. and tr. R. Walzer under the title *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, Oxford 1985, ch. 15, § 11 (where the *ra'īs al-awwal* is the imam); id., *Taḥṣīl al-sa'āda*, ed. J. Āl Yāsīn, Beirut 1981, §§ 58, 61; tr. M. Mahdi, 'The Attainment of Happiness', in his *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* (partly reprinted in Lerner and Mahdi, *Sourcebook*), §§ 57 f., on the meaning of the terms king and imam.

5 Aristotle, *al-Akhlāq*, ed. M. Badawī, Kuwait 1979, 293 f. (1160af).

6 al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl al-madanī*, ed. and tr. D.M. Dunlop, Cambridge 1961, § 54; ed. F.M. Najjār, *al-Fuṣūl al-muntaza'a*, Beirut 1971, § 58.

are imitated and all his views accepted. This is government by the true king, who can rule as he wishes; he is not bound by the law but rather makes it, and this is implicitly identified as the best. The second type arises when the qualities of such a king are dispersed in a number of individuals, who will rule as a team: they are known as *al-ruʾasāʾ al-akhyār wa-dhawī ʾl-faḍāʾil*, and the only difference between them and the first chief is that they are a team rather than an individual. They are not bound by any law either, but rather make it.[7] The laws are posited by the wise in both, as Kraemer puts it.[8] The third type of government is again monarchic, but this time the ruler lacks the ability to lay down the law: he can only preserve and interpret the law laid down by the imams who preceded him. Such a ruler is called *malik al-sunna*, king according to the law. Finally, the qualities required in such a man may also be dispersed in a number of individuals, who will rule as a team: they are known as *ruʾasāʾ al-sunna*.

Al-Fārābī here applies the term imam to rulers of the perfect type and identifies the regime of *al-akhyār* as a variant version of perfect government, in conformity with Plato's view that "if there is a single outstanding man among the rulers, it is called a kingship (*basileia*); if more than one, aristocracy".[9] In the
309 same vein the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā speak of | *dawlat ahl al-khayr* meaning virtuous government with a plurality of rulers,[10] while Ibn Sīnā agrees with Plato and al-Fārābī that the virtuous regime can have a single ruler or several: in the former case it is called *siyāsat al-malik*, which is the best; in the latter case, *siyāsat al-akhyār*, which is second-best.[11] Ibn Rushd, too, says that virtuous leadership may be divided into "the leadership of the king and that of the best";[12] he also reproduces al-Fārābī's passage on the four forms of virtuous government

7 Cf. al-Fārābī, *Talkhīs nawāmīs Aflāṭūn*, ed. F. Gabrieli, London 1952, 41.21: "Then he (Plato) explained that when people are *akhyāran afāḍil*, they do not need laws or rules at all", paraphrasing Plato, *Laws*, 875c (cf. J. Kraemer, 'The *Jihād* of the *Falāsifa*', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10, 1987, 310 f.).

8 Kraemer, 'The *Jihād* of the *Falāsifa*', 308.

9 *Republic*, 445d.

10 *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, Beirut 1957, iv, 187 f., describing the formation of such a regime in a 'city' taking the form of a spiritual brotherhood.

11 Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-majmūʿ* (*aw al-ḥikma al-ʿaruḍiyya*) *fī maʿānī kitāb rīṭūrīqā*, ed. M.S. Sālim, Cairo n.d., 41; id., *al-Shifāʾ*, *al-Manṭiq*, viii (*al-Khaṭāba*), ed. M.S. Salem, Cairo 1954, 63.1, 10. He also uses *siyāsat al-akhyār* as a generic term for the virtuous regime, cf. below, note 23. (The scribe consistently wrote *ikhtiyār* for *akhyār*.)

12 Ibn Rushd, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 80 = 207. Cf. also his passage on *madīnat al-akhyār* referred to below, note 31.

(without mentioning that he is quoting),[13] and cites the Platonic statement on the kingship and aristocracy which forms the starting point for all.[14] In sum, all understand the regime of the *akhyār* as aristocracy, not in the sense of *ashrāf* or *'uẓamā'*, or government by such men, but rather in the sense of government by a team of philosophers. How then can al-Fārābī identify it as an imperfect constitution characterized by a combination of virtuous deeds and imperfect beliefs in the passage quoted by Ibn Rushd? Either he must have been nodding or else Ibn Rushd must be misquoting him.

Al-ri'āsa al-imāmiyya = the Perfect Regime

The possibility that al-Fārābī was nodding can be ruled out, for there is nothing problematic about his statement as Ibn Bājja knew it. According to him, "all constitutions (*siyar*) in our time and before, according to most reports to reach us—except for what Abū Naṣr (al-Fārābī) relates about the constitution of the ancient Persians (*sīrat al-furs al-ūlā*)—are mixtures of the five (perfect and imperfect) constitutions, and most of what we find in them is made up of the four (imperfect) ones".[15] Ibn Bājja's five constitutions are those of Plato: the virtuous | regime (whether monarchic or aristocratic) and another four, 310
namely timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny, all other constitutions being mixtures of these five.[16] What he is saying is that with the exception of the regime reported by al-Fārābī for the ancient Persians, all the constitutions that he, Ibn Bājja, has ever heard of are mixtures. In other words, the constitution reported by al-Fārābī for the Persians was pure. It could in principle have been pure timocracy, pure oligarchy or a pure form of some other imperfect regime, but this is clearly not what Ibn Bājja means. What he is saying that al-Fārābī credited the ancient Persians with perfect government, precisely as we would expect on the basis of the terms *imāmiyya* and *akhyār*.

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13 Ibn Rushd, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 80 f. = 207 ff.

14 Ibn Rushd, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 52 = 164.

15 Ibn Bājja, *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid*, 167a; ed. and tr. M. Asín Palacios under the title *El Regimen del Solitario*, Madrid and Granada 1946, 11; ed. M. Fakhry in his *Rasā'il Ibn Bājja al-ilāhiyya*, Beirut 1968, 43.4 (given that this work only survives in one manuscript and that both Asín Palacios and Fakhry sensibly include the folio numbers in their edition, I shall henceforth refer to the foliation alone); partial tr. by L. Berman in Lerner and Mahdi, *Sourcebook*, 127 f. (preserves the page numbering of Asín Palacios' edition, but not the foliation).

16 Plato, *Republic*, 445d, 544 ff.

Ibn Bājja does not say what al-Fārābī called the regime attested among the Persians, but he himself uses the term *al-madīna*/*sīra al-imāmiyya* of the perfect regime. Thus he pronounces a factor of corruption present in the four (imperfect) cities to be absent from the *imāmiyya* city and observes that the science known as *al-ʿilm al-madanī* concerns itself with the aims of the individual who forms part of a *madīna imāmiyya*; and he declares that just as health is a single condition natural to the body and distinguished from many unnatural diseases, so the *sīra imāmiyya* is a single state natural to the soul and distinguished from several unnatural *siyar*.[17] There is no suggestion that imamic government is characterized by a plurality of rulers. For all that, one would assume him to be using al-Fārābī's terminology here. In sum, Ibn Bājja's paraphrase of al-Fārābī lends strong support to the surmise that Ibn Rushd's quotation is corrupt, and that in two respects. First, the *madīna imāmiyya* must have been an ideal constitution to al-Fārābī, not one limited to perfection in respect of deeds alone; and secondly, it cannot have stood for an aristocratic regime, or at least not for that alone. Either it stood for true kingship or else, more plausibly, it stood for ideal government as such, whether monarchic *or* aristocratic.

311 **Reconstructing the Passage**

In corroboration of this we may turn to the passage of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* which caused Ibn Rushd to cite al-Fārābī's statement and which is probably what al-Fārābī was commenting on himself. Aristotle here says that there are four constitutions—democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy and monarchy—and gives a brief description of each: democracy is a form of government under which the citizens distribute the offices of state among themselves by lot, whereas oligarchy imposes a property qualification; aristocracy imposes an educational qualification, and monarchy is either kingship, which is limited by prescribed conditions, or tyranny, which is not limited by anything. A bit later he adds

17 Ibn Bājja, *Tadbīr*, 176a (twice), 181a. Asín Palacios consistently reads *al-iqāmiyya*, and Berman's translation duly has 'lasting' (pp. 129, 133). But this makes no sense, and the Hebrew translation has *kohanit*, showing that the original was *imāmiyya*, cf. E.I.J. Rosenthal, 'The Place of Politics in the Philosophy of Ibn Bajja', *Islamic Culture* 25, 1951 (reprinted in his *Studia Semitica*, ii, Cambridge 1971), 208n; and again in his *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, Cambridge 1962, 166. Fakhry's edition has *imāmiyya* throughout (but *siyar* for *sīra* in the third passage).

some comments on the ends for which they exist: the *telos* of democracy is freedom; that of oligarchy, wealth; that of aristocracy, the maintenance of education and norms; the *telos* of monarchy is omitted, but that of tyranny is identified as protection (of the tyrant).[18] He does not say anything about their perfection or imperfection.

In the 'old' translation of the *Rhetoric* used by al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd,[19] which survives to this day, the four constitutions are labelled *dīmūqrāṭiyya, khasāsat al-ri'āsa, arisṭūqrāṭiyya* and *waḥdāniyyat al-sulṭān*.[20] Only the last two are relevant here. *Arisṭūqrāṭiyya* is glossed *jūdat al-tasalluṭ*, excellent government, and described as based on education/culture (*'alā ṭarīq al-adab*) and (by mistranslation) as a constitution of the type obedient to the laws;[21] this regime is said to be one in which those who advise on the laws hold power,[22] and its aim is given as "the constancy (reading *thabāt* for *dhawāt*) of education/culture and norms (*al-adab wa'l-sunna*)". Monarchy is identified as a [single] ruler | over everyone (*yakūnu fīhā sulṭān* [*wāḥid*] *'alā kulli wāḥid*), 312
either in accordance with order and foundation (*bi-niẓām wa-uss*) or in unlimited disorder (*fitna ghayr maḥdūda*), and the aim of the disordered variety (i.e. tyranny) is given as "preservation and guarding". In short, the translators managed to make aristocracy sound by far the best of the four.

Al-Fārābī, scanning the text for the virtuous city of which he assumed Aristotle to be an adherent along with Plato, will not unnaturally have assumed *arisṭūqrāṭiyya*/*jūdat al-tasalluṭ* to be it. This was certainly how Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd read the passage. Thus Ibn Sīnā uses aristocracy as a generic term for virtuous regimes, both in the Greek form *al-arisṭūqrāṭiyya* and in the Arabic form *siyāsat al-akhyār*, though the latter is also his term for the specific variety

18 *Rhetoric*, 1365b, 33–35; 1366a, 1.

19 Cf. M. Aouad, 'Les fondements de la *Rhétorique* d'Aristote reconsiderés par Fārābī, ou le concept de point de vue immédiat et commun', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 2, 1992, 158 ff.

20 *Aristotle's Ars Rhetorica. The Arabic Version*, ed. M.C. Lyons, Cambridge 1982, i, 40 f. (1365bf of the Greek).

21 "By education I mean that laid down by the law", Aristotle says. But in the translation it is the constitution (*al-madaniyya*) rather than the education (*al-adab*) which is *al-muṭī'a lil-sunan*, and the expression means obedient to, rather than laid down by, the law.

22 *fa-inna 'lladhīna yushīrūna bi'l-sunan yatasallaṭūna bi-jūdat al-tasalluṭ*, rendering Aristotle's "for it is those who have been loyal to established usage who hold office under aristocracy". Lyons suggests *yuthbitūna* for *yushīrūna*, which may well be what the translators meant, but the error seems to have become canonical: Ibn Rushd also has *yushīrūna* (cf. note 24).

in which government is shared.[23] And Ibn Rushd comments on *arisṭūqrāṭiyya*/*jūdat al-tasalluṭ* in the *Rhetoric* as follows: "As for excellent government, it is the power which is based on education and imitation of what the law prescribes, for it is those who advise on what the law prescribes who hold power under it. *This is the government by which the good state of the inhabitants of the city and human happiness is obtained*. For this reason these (advisors) were people of virtue (*ahl faḍā'il*) capable of determining the acts which will be good for the city, and also people of resolution wary of things likely to corrupt the city from outside or inside. This is why the city is known by that name".[24] The passage in italics, which has no basis in Aristotle's text, identifies *jūdat al-tasalluṭ* as the *madīna fāḍila* familiar from Plato, and the paragraph which follows rewrites Aristotle with that identification in mind. One would assume al-Fārābī to have understood the text similarly. It is after this identification of *jūdat al-tasalluṭ* as the virtuous city that Ibn Rushd quotes or paraphrases al-Fārābī's statement on the imamic constitution.

313 In view of all this one would assume al-Fārābī's own version to have run along the following lines (the reconstruction is *bi'l-ma'nā* rather than *bi'l-lafẓ*):

> The power that (Aristotle) mentions here (i.e. *jūdat al-tasalluṭ*) is of two types, kingship (*ri'āsat al-malik*)—which is the city in which both the opinions and the actions are in accordance with the requirements of the theoretical sciences and in which there is a single ruler imitated by all—and secondly, the rule of the best (*ri'āsat al-akhyār*), in which the opinions and actions are also virtuous,[25] but in which the qualities required in the

23 Cf. his *Riṭūrīqā*, 39.ult.–41.ult.: the *asṭūqrāṭiyya* (sic) is *al-riyāsa al-fāḍila al-ḥikmiyya* in which the entire socio-political hierarchy is based on virtue. When the leadership is based on both theoretical and practical virtue, it is called *siyāsat al-akhyār*; the best regime is *siyāsat al-malik*, the next best is *siyāsat al-akhyār*. Similarly id., *Shifā'*, *Manṭiq*, viii, 62.11, 63.1, 10: *siyāsat al-akhyār* is when the inhabitants all occupy the positions suitable for their particular virtue; they may be ruled by one leader or several; the common name for *siyāsat al-khayr* (sic; read *al-akhyār*?) and *siyāsat al-malik* is *al-suqrāṭiyya* (sic; read *arisṭūqrāṭiyya*).

24 Ibn Rushd, *Talkhīṣ al-khaṭāba*, ed. Sālim, 137; ed. and tr. Aouad, 1, 8, 5. For earlier discussions, see Kraemer, 'The *Jihād* of the *Falāsifa*', 307n; C.E. Butterworth, 'The Political Teaching of Averroes', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 2, 1992, 189 ff.; id., 'Die Politischen Lehren von Avicenna und Averroës', in *Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen*, ii, 2, ed. I. Fetscher and H. Münkler, Munich and Zürich 1993, 160.

25 Cf. Ibn Sīnā: "when this leadership is based on the theoretical and practical virtues, it is called *siyāsat al-akhyār*" (*Riṭūrīqā*, 40.ult.).

> ruler are dispersed among several. This (i.e. *jūdat al-tasalluṭ*)[26] is known as *al-imāmiyya*, and it is said that it existed among the ancient Persians. …

If this is accepted, three questions remain. Why did al-Fārābī call the highest form of government imamic? Why did he think it had existed among the ancient Persians? And how did his statement come to take the form it has in Ibn Rushd?

Why 'Imamic'?

Al-Fārābī will have called the highest form of government imamic in order to express that it was a regime in which the law was embodied in living human beings, whether a single imam or a team standing in his place, as opposed to one in which the law was written down and administered by a less outstanding ruler, whom he called a *malik* or *raʾīs al-sunna* and who might also be replaced by a team. Like Plato, he "preferred the rule of pure unbound intelligence to the governance of the law".[27] The distinction between living and codified law is made in several of al-Fārābī's works, with the *malik*/*raʾīs* or *ruʾasāʾ al-sunna* in charge of the latter,[28] but there is no blanket term for the regimes based on the former. *Al-sīra*/*siyāsa*/*riʾāsa*/*madīna al-imāmiyya* is a plausible candidate in that role. All four forms of government were in effect | monarchic, for the 314
men making up the team would act as a single person, *ka-nafs wāḥida*, thanks to their common aim, as Ibn Sīnā says.[29] The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā also stress that the *ahl al-akhyār* will function "as a single soul in all aspects of their government and everything they intend in the way of helping the religion and seeking

26 This construction requires *jūdat al-tasalluṭ* to be feminine, and so it is in the Arabic translation (*wa-amma jūdat al-tasalluṭ fa-hiya allatī takūnu ʿalā ṭarīq al-adab*). Ibn Rushd has *huwa* in the corresponding passage, but *hiya* in connection with *waḥdāniyyat al-tasalluṭ*, so either both were possible or *huwa* is a misreading.

27 Kraemer, 'The *Jihād* of the *Falāsifa*', 310 f.; cf. J. Macy, 'The Rule of Law and the Rule of Wisdom in Plato, al-Fārābī, and Maimonides', in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions*, ed. W.M. Brinner and S.D. Ricks, Atlanta 1986, 205 f.

28 Fārābī, *Fuṣūl*, § 54/58; id., *Milla*, §§ 8–9, 14b; id., *Siyāsa madaniyya*, 80 f. = 37 (ed. Hyderabad, 50 f.).

29 Ibn Sīnā, *Rīṭūrīqā*, 41.7; id., *Shifāʾ*, *Manṭiq*, viii, 63.1; compare Fārābī, *Siyāsa madaniyya*, 80 = 37 (ed. Hyderabad, 50), where virtuous rulers who follow one another also are like a single soul.

the next world".[30] And Ibn Rushd agrees: "for even though it (i.e. *madīnat al-akhyār*) has many leaderships, it amounts to a single one and aims at a single end".[31] So there was nothing odd about calling both the monarchic and the aristocratic forms of ideal government imamic. Al-Fārābī will have borrowed the terms *imāmiyya* and *sunna* from contemporary religious language in order to describe two types of government based on philosophy, just as he borrowed the term *jāhilī* to describe cities ignorant of philosophy. The fact that he uses the term Imāmī for the highest form of government, contrasting it with Sunna, could be taken to lend weight to the suggestion that he was a Shīʿite by origin, but this question has to be left aside here.[32] What needs to be noted is that he must have abandoned his *imāmiyya-sunna* terminology at an early stage. It is easy to see why: whether or not he had Shīʿite roots, he did not want philosophy to be identified as Shīʿite, partly because he was a universalist who held the highest truth to be above religious and sectarian distinctions and partly because it was his mission to make philosophy acceptable to the Muslims at large, not just to a minority. The identification of virtuous government, whether monarchic or aristocratic, as imamic does not appear in any of his extant works. The Sunna label seems eventually to have receded as well, for though the *malik*/*raʾīs al-sunna* appears in the *Fuṣūl*, *Kitāb al-milla* and *Siyāsa madaniyya*, he has become *al-raʾīs al-thānī* in the *Madīna fāḍila*.[33] (The *ruʾasāʾ al-sunna* who replace him as a team appear only in the *Fuṣūl*.)

315 **The Ancient Persians**

What then did al-Fārābī have in mind when he credited the ancient Persians with perfect government? The answer probably lies in al-Masʿūdī's account of how the Persians instituted kingship under Gayomard, a figure of the remote past identified now as a Zoroastrian Adam and now (as here) as a descendant of Noah:

> The factor which impelled the people of that era to institute kingship and set up a leader was their realization that most people are innately dis-

30 *Rasāʾil*, iv, 187 f.

31 *Compendio di metafisica*, ed. and tr. C. Quirós Rodríguez, Madrid 1919 (facsimile reprint Cordoba 1998), book 4, § 39.

32 References are given in P. Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, Edinburgh 2004, ch. 14, note 69.

33 Above, note 28; *Perfect State*, ch. 15, § 13.

> posed to mutual hatred, envy, oppression and hostility, and that there is an evil in their characters which can only be rectified by fear. They proceeded to reflect on the circumstances of the creation, the regulation of the body and the form of man, the feeling and intelligent being. They saw that the body in its structure and nature is set up with senses contributing to something (*maʿnā*) other than themselves which makes them come and go and which distinguishes between the impressions they bring it, their perceptions being different. This something is located in the heart. They saw that the welfare of the body lies in its government (*tadbīr*): when its ruler (*mudabbir*) is corrupted, the rest is corrupted too, and perfect, well executed acts no longer come forth from it. When they saw that this microcosm—the visible,[34] human body—cannot work or function properly without the rectitude of the above-mentioned leader, they realized that people cannot be kept in order without a king to dispense justice among them, impose equity on them and apply the laws to them in accordance with the dictates of the intellect (*ʿalā ḥasbi mā yūjibu ʾl-ʿaql*). So they went to Kayūmarth, son of Lāwid, and told him that they needed a king and upholder of equity among them. 'You are the most virtuous and noble among us', they said, 'as well as the oldest and the remnant of our forefather. There is nobody like you in this era. Take charge of our affairs and be the manager (*al-qāʾim*) among us. We will hear and obey and do whatever you see fit'.[35]

The ancient Persians here reason their way to the necessity of kingship on the basis of a philosophical understanding of the natural world, unaided by revelation, much as Ḥayy b. Yaqẓān was later to reason his way to the nature of ultimate reality. They understand, in al-Fārābī's formulation, that "the virtuous city resembles the complete and healthy body" in that the organs of the body include "one ruling organ, which is the heart", and that "the same holds true of the city. Its parts are different by nature. … There is in it a man who is the ruler"; and they further realize that as the ruling organ is the most perfect part of the body, so "the ruler of the city is the most perfect member of the city both in the features specific to him and in the features he shares with | 316
others".[36] The account does not explicitly say that the polity thus established

34 Reading *marʾī* with note 3.

35 al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. and tr. C. Pellat, Beirut 1966–1979, i, §531 (ed. and tr. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, ii, 106 f.). For Gayomard's descent, see §530.

36 *Perfect State*, ch. 15, §§4, 5.

was a virtuous one, i.e. one devoted to the acquisition of happiness on the basis of philosophy, but it is certainly a natural assumption. It was presumably on the basis of al-Masʿūdī that Ibn Khaldūn held the Persians to have practised government based on human rationality (*al-siyāsa al-ʿaqliyya*) of the type based on philosophy (*ʿalā jihat al-ḥikma*).[37]

If this is what al-Fārābī had in mind, was it in al-Fārābī's work that al-Masʿūdī found the account? This is most unlikely, though he was certainly familiar with al-Fārābī's writings,[38] for al-Fārābī rarely provides concrete illustrations of his ideas, and he is extremely brief on the few occasions on which he does so.[39] The chances are that he said little or no more about the Persians in his lost work than he does in Ibn Bājja's and Ibn Rushd's summaries. But as a native of Fārāb he will have been well informed about the Iranian past, including claims such as this one presumably made by philosophically inclined Iranians keen to present their pagan forebears in an intellectually respectable light. He certainly cannot have been troubled by the idea that an infidel nation should have hit upon the perfect constitution in the remote past, for he regarded philosophy as a truth available to all people, whatever religion (*milla*) they might adhere to, and as older than religion too.[40]

Ibn Rushd's Version

How then did Ibn Rushd come to identify imamic government as an imperfect constitution? The Hebrew translation of his *Talkhīṣ al-khaṭāba*, made by Todros Todrosi and completed in 1337, could at first sight be taken to suggest that all we are up against is a copyist's mistake. Extensively quoted in the rhetorical work of Judah Messer Leon (d. c. 1526), it renders the problematic passage as follows:

> There are two varieties of such rulership, royal supremacy, this being the State whose opinions and actions conform to the logical requirements
317 of the specula|tive sciences; and secondly, supremacy of the best, a State whose actions *and opinions* are virtuous only. The latter is called a priestly

37 Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, Beirut n.d., 336; tr. F. Rosenthal, Princeton 1967, ii, 138.

38 S.M. Stern, 'Al-Masʿūdī and the Philosopher al-Fārābī', *Al-Masʿūdī Millenary Commemoration Volume*, Aligarh 1960; reprinted in id., *Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Thought*, ed. F.W. Zimmermann, London 1983.

39 See for example *Siyāsa madaniyya*, 97, 103 = 48, 52 (ed. Hyderabad, 67, 73).

40 *Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda*, §56 = §63; al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, ed. M. Mahdi, Beirut 1970, §§108, 110.

> State (*ha-kohanit*), and, according to Abū Naṣr's account, is said to have been in existence among the ancient Persians.[41]

Apparently, then, Todros Todrosi's copy of Ibn Rushd's rhetorical work defined the imamic regime as virtuous in respect of both opinions and actions, seemingly solving our problem. But the solution is wrong. First, the 'only' (*lekhad*) does not make sense any more. It is true that one could translate it 'exclusively',[42] but that still leaves the second objection, namely that the explanation of their natures does not bring out any difference between them. Both are virtuous, in precisely the same way. Thirdly, it is not just in his commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* that Ibn Rushd identifies the imamic regime as virtuous in respect of actions alone; he says the same in his commentary on Plato's *Republic*.[43] In short, Ibn Rushd must have meant what he said in the problematic passage. It follows that Todros Todrosi must have emended it, just as I am trying to do here and for the same reason: the passage cannot be right.

But Ibn Rushd was better placed than most to recognize a mistake in al-Fārābī's text. He fully accepted that perfect government could take a monarchic or an aristocratic form, and one would have expected him to say so in his comments on *jūdat al-tasalluṭ*. Instead he cites a passage which does such violence to the terms *imāmiyya* and *akhyār* that a translator felt obliged to emend it. Was it then Ibn Rushd himself who mangled al-Fārābī? Given that he cites the passage twice and moreover works with the result,[44] he cannot have done so inadvertently, unless we postulate that he misremembered a passage he had read so long ago that the mistake had become part of his normal thought world. It seems more likely that he found the mangled passage in his manuscript of al-Fārābī and proceeded to make such sense of it as he could.

The mangled version of the text speaks of a constitution combining deficient opinions and virtuous acts. It was a well-known combination. One could be upright without being a philosopher. Galen adduced a famous example in his synopsis of Plato's *Republic*, which may have | been the only, or main, 318
version in which the *Republic* was known to al-Fārābī and Ibn Rushd.[45] In a

41 Yudah Messer Leon, *The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow* (*Sēpher Nōpheth Ṣūphīm*), ed. and tr. I. Rabinowitz, Ithaca and London 1983, book II, ch. 17, § 5.

42 Thus Rosenthal, 'Politics in the Philosophy of Ibn Bājja', 208, note 72.

43 Above, note 3.

44 Cf. below, last section.

45 That Ibn Rushd used Galen's summary was first proposed by P. Kraus and R. Walzer in their edition, *Galeni Compenium Timaei Platonis* (*Plato Arabus I*), London 1951, 2 f., and

fragment of this synopsis preserved in Arabic he mentions that many people are unable to understand demonstrative arguments and therefore stand in need of *rumūz*, parables (by which, the glossator adds, Galen meant tales of rewards and punishments in a future life); for example, the people called Christians draw their faith from parables and miracles, yet sometimes act in the same way as those who philosophize, e.g. by pursuing justice as keenly as the philosophers, displaying contempt for death and practising restraint in matters of cohabitation, food and drink.[46]

The equivalent of a virtuous Christian was a virtuous Muslim: somebody who acted as nobly as the philosophers even though he only knew the truth in the popularized form of revealed religion. Al-Fārābī presumably envisaged his *malik*/*ra'īs* and *ru'ūs al-sunna* as virtuous believers of this type, along the lines of the Rāshidūn: unlike the true king and the *akhyār*, they had no theoretical wisdom; the *ri'āsa sunniyya* did not need philosophy by nature, as al-Fārābī said.[47] This suggests (but now we are venturing into deep conjecture) that his comments on Aristotle's *jūdat al-tasalluṭ* moved on to a discussion of the *sunna* regime, along the following lines:

> The power that (Aristotle) mentions here (i.e. *jūdat al-tasalluṭ*) is of two types, kingship (*ri'āsat al-malik*)—which is the city in which both the opinions and the actions are in accordance with the requirements of the theoretical sciences and in which there is a single ruler imitated by all—and secondly, the rule of the best (*ri'āsat al-akhyār*), in which the opinions and actions are also virtuous, but in which the qualities required in the ruler are dispersed among several. This (i.e. *jūdat al-tasalluṭ*) is known as *al-imāmiyya*, and it is said that it existed among the ancient Persians. … (details).
>
> There are also cities in which only the actions are virtuous. They are ruled by either a *malik al-sunna* or *ru'asā' al-sunna*. …

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again by Rosenthal, *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 9 (differently S. van den Bergh, review of Rosenthal, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 21, 1958, 409). The supposition that Fārābī also used it is reinforced by Gutas' demonstration that he used Galen's summary of the *Laws* for his *Talkhīs al-nawāmīs* (D. Gutas, 'Galen's Synopsis of Plato's Laws and Fārābī's *Talḫīṣ*', in *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism. Studies … dedicated to H.J. Drossaart Lulofs*, ed. G. Endress and R. Kruk, Leiden 1997).

46 R. Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians*, Oxford 1949, 15 f.

47 Fārābī, *Milla*, § 18; Kraemer, 'The *Jihād* of the *Falāsifa*', 308 f.

If so, the passage was simply an early version of the paragraph in the *Fuṣūl* 319
discussing the four types of virtuous leadership, two with and two without theoretical perfection.[48] And if this is correct, it is not surprising that it was revised: ideal government was seemingly identified as Imāmī Shīʿite, second-best government as Sunnī, and the only people to have practised the ideal were the ancient Persians. This may have been music to the ears of Persians who happened to be both Shīʿites and philosophers, but it will have sounded absurd to everyone else. It was surely the Persians who combined wrong beliefs with virtuous action? Everyone knew that they had been excellent rulers even though they had been infidels: their power had lasted for 4000 years thanks to their justice whereas the Umayyads barely lasted a century despite their Muslim faith, which showed that kingship could survive unbelief but not injustice, and so forth, as one could read in the mirror literature.[49] It may be conjectured that a copyist reasoning along such lines moved the combination of deficient opinions and virtuous actions from the *sunna* regimes to the Persians, by making it the antecedent of the sentence "This is known as *al-imāmiyya*, and it is said that it existed among the ancient Persians". The result of such a move would certainly be that the Persians came to exemplify *riʾāsat al-akhyār*, that *riʾāsat al-akhyār* turned into an imperfect regime, that this imperfect form regime was henceforth known as *al-imāmiyya*, and that the apparent bias in favour of the Shīʿites disappeared; and since Persian government was well known to have been monarchic, the distinction between *riʾāsat al-malik* and *riʾāsat al-akhyār* in terms of the number of rulers became nonsensical and had to be removed, completing the transformation.

Ibn Rushd's Use of the Term Imamic

The chances are that it was in this mangled form that Ibn Rushd, unlike Ibn Bājja, encountered the statement. Instead of emending it, he proceeded on the assumption that it was meaningful. He did so by taking the adjective imamic to be derived from imam in the Sunnī sense of that word, meaning a rightly guided caliph who ruled in accordance with revealed law, such as the Rāshidūn. In other words, he correctly saw that the combination of virtuous conduct and defective beliefs | must refer to a regime of the type that al-Fārābī had labelled 320
sunnī. As Butterworth points out, the passage only makes sense on the assump-

48 Cf. above, note 6.

49 Cf. Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, ch. 13, notes 69–73.

tion that the rulers combine their defective opinions with virtuous behaviour by faithfully following traditional law.[50] Butterworth further suggests that they exemplify the 'legal rulership' described by Ibn Rushd, which is tantamount to proposing the conjecture made here: for Ibn Rushd's account of 'legal rulership' is in fact al-Fārābī's *mulk sunnī*; the entire passage to which Butterworth refers comes from al-Fārābī's *Fuṣūl* on the four types of virtuous leadership, by a true king or an aristocracy replacing him on the one hand and by a *malik al-sunna* or a team replacing him on the other.[51] That al-Fārābī's constitution combining defective opinions with perfect behaviour is simply his *sunna* regime mislabeled imamic also explains why we do not seem to hear of it in his many accounts of perfect and imperfect regimes in his extant works: it is actually there, but under a different name.

Al-Fārābī's *sunna* regime having been identified as imamic, Ibn Rushd duly modified al-Fārābī's definition of the word imam. Al-Fārābī observed that the meanings of imam, king, philosopher and lawgiver were really much the same, though the nuances were different: the meaning of imam in Arabic, for example, was "somebody whose example is followed and who is well received".[52] In a summary of this passage, Ibn Rushd gives the meaning of imam as "somebody who is followed *in his actions*", adding (in Lerner's rendering of the Hebrew translation) that "he who is followed in these actions by which he is a philosopher is an imam in the absolute sense". Unclear though this is, he seems to be proposing a distinction between imams imitated for their action alone and super-imams whose actions show them to have the right beliefs as well, the latter being al-Fārābī's philosopher kings.[53]

Having revised the meaning of imam to fit the garbled passage, he twice
321 used the term imamic in a manner which implicitly equated | imams with the Rāshidūn. The development of democratic regimes may be such, he observes, that "the imamic part in them is by now completely tyrannical";[54] and "the

50 Butterworth, 'Political Teaching of Averroes', 191; id., 'Politische Lehren', 161.

51 Ibn Rushd, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 80 f. = 207 f.; cf. Rosenthal's comments, ibid., 283. For Fārābī's passage, see above, note 6.

52 Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl*, § 60 = § 57. The word 'king' has to be supplied in §§ 58, 61, since it is defined in § 59 and figures in Mahdi's translation on the basis of the Hyderabad edition (cf. his § 58), as also in Ibn Rushd's paraphrase (in the following note).

53 Ibn Rushd, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 61.15 = 177. Rosenthal's translation is almost identical. The Hebrew translator rendered imam as *kohen*. (The objections of J.L. Teicher in his learned review of Rosenthal, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 5, 1960, 191, have rightly been ignored by Lerner.)

54 Ibn Rushd, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 85 = 215.

similarity between imamic and tyrannical cities often leads the imamic parts in these cities to be transformed into tyrannical ones, thus bringing into disrepute him whose aim is imamic, as is the case with the imamic parts in the states to be found in our time".[55] In both passages he is using the term imamic in its traditional contrast with *mulk*, and since it was the imamate of the Rāshidūn that was transformed into kingship, every reader will automatically have envisaged the imamic elements as something exemplified by them.

In short, Ibn Rushd managed to make sense of imamic government as *ri'āsa sunniyya*. But he left one tell-tale inconsistency behind: al-Fārābī's garbled passage equates imamic government with *ri'āsat al-akhyār*, which does not fit either al-Fārābī's usage or Ibn Rushd's own. (It makes for strange equations today, too: *imam* having been translated as *kohen* (priest) in Hebrew, Lerner translates *kohanit* as 'aristocratic'.) The strange use of *ri'āsat al-akhyār* in the problematic passage confirms that it was not Ibn Rushd who rewrote al-Fārābī. The damage must have been an accomplished fact in the manuscript of al-Fārābī's commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* that he had between his hands. A brilliant man, he merely happened to be good at damage limitation.

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55 Ibn Rushd, *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 86 = 216 f.

CHAPTER 12

Al-Fārābī's Imperfect Constitutions*

One of the many oddities about al-Fārābī's work to strike a newcomer is that he did not think of constitutions in political terms. To him, a constitution (for which he used terms such as *madīna*, city, *riyāsa*, leadership, and *siyāsa*, governance) was a society characterized by a particular evaluation of the highest good, not by a particular distribution of power, so that for example an oligarchy was a polity in which wealth was regarded as the ultimate aim in life. To some extent, this is in line with Plato and Aristotle, who also thought of constitutions in much broader terms than is customary today, and Aristotle identified them in terms of their ends as well, giving that of oligarchy as wealth.[1] But "constitution" (*politeia*) in ancient parlance did include the distribution of power, on which the modern concept focuses, whereas al-Fārābī uses the term to mean no more than a set of beliefs and practices shared by a group, a collective way of life.[2] The government it involved was government of the soul. He did assume that those capable of influencing people's minds in a particular polity would be rewarded with wealth and power, so that the political organization of that polity would reflect its dominant values, but his interest was entirely in the values. Ordinary government had no aim in itself: either it was just power play or else it was a mere instrument in the service of higher things, and the key question was precisely, what higher things? What values were to prevail in an ideal society? This is what he explored with his different constitutions. The same is true of most later philosophers working under his influence. Ibn Rushd stands out for having put the regimes back into service for political analysis, to be followed in this by Ibn Khaldūn;[3] but in the eastern Islamic world the regimes remained a-political.

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1 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1366a; cf. *Politics* 1323a.

2 See the paper by Dimitri Gutas in this volume [Ed.: "The Meaning of *madanī* in al-Fārābī's 'Political' Philosophy," in "The Greek Strand in Islamic Political Thought: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 16–27 June 2003," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57, 2004, pp. 259–282].

3 See the papers by Maroun Aouad and Abdesselam Cheddadi in this volume [Ed.: Aouad, "Does Averroes Have a Philosophy of History?," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57,

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Al-Fārābī was greatly exercised by his a-political constitutions, and not just 192
by the "virtuous" variety (meaning that devoted to happiness as understood by the philosophers). He dealt with imperfect regimes in at least seven of his books. What was he trying to say? Why did he keep reformulating his views? How had constitutions come to be seen as cultural orientations, and in general, how does his thought relate to that of late antiquity? In what follows I shall go through his statements with these questions in mind.

(1) *Fuṣūl*, First Passage

The simplest of al-Fārābī's pictures consists of cities of two types, the necessity city (*al-madīna al-ḍarūriyya*) and the virtuous city (*al-madīna al-fāḍila*). In the necessity city people cooperate to secure their basic needs, no more. In the virtuous city they cooperate to secure something more as well, namely the best of all things (*afḍal al-ashyā'*), which they regard as the true purpose of human existence. What might that be? Some, we are told, define the best of all things as the enjoyment of pleasure (*al-tamattuʿ bi'l-ladhdhāt*), while others hold it to be wealth (*al-yasār*), or a combination of the two; but Socrates and Plato held the best of all things to be moral perfection in this life and ultimate happiness in the hereafter, and the virtuous city to them was one in which people cooperated to achieve this goal. This is clearly what it was to al-Fārābī too (§ 25/28).[4]

Two things may be noted about this passage. First, the basic distinction is not between perfect and imperfect regimes, but rather between those which aim at nothing but the bare necessities and those which aim for more. All those which aim for more are called virtuous (*fāḍila*). Only one of its subtypes is truly virtuous or perfect, but all aim for what is best in the eyes of the inhabitants themselves.

Secondly, al-Fārābī is here sticking close to his sources. Plato starts the discussion of constitutions in his *Politeia* by having Socrates construct a simple city by way of thought experiment. This simple city is fit only for swine in the opinion of Glaucon, so Socrates adds luxuries, comparing the simple city with a man in health and that endowed with luxury to a man in fever: for luxury engenders competition, he explains, meaning that now the city will

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2004, pp. 411–441; Cheddadi, "La tradition philosophique et scientifique gréco-arabe dans la *Muqaddima* d'Ibn Khaldūn," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57, 2004, pp. 469–497].

4 The first paragraph number refers to al-Fārābī (1961), *Fuṣūl al-madanī. Aphorisms of the Statesman*, ed. and tr. D.M. Dunlop, Cambridge; the second to the re-edition by F.M. Najjār (ed.) (1971), *Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī Fuṣūl muntazaʿa*, Beirut.

need people to guard it. What would be the best way of organizing a city with guardians? It is in answer to that question that he construes his perfect
193 city and discusses various imperfect regimes | into which it could degenerate (timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny). Al-Fārābī is here reproducing the contrast between the simple city and all the rest.

His terminology is Platonic too. Plato called his minimalist city a necessity city (*anankaiotatê polis*, *Republic* 369d). Al-Fārābī's *madīna ḍarūriyya* is a literal translation of that term, presumably taken over from the translation or epitome of the *Republic* that he used. The "feverish" city that comes about when Socrates adds luxury to the simple city of necessity (*Republic* 372e–373a) is al-Fārābī's city devoted to "the enjoyment of pleasure" (*al-tamattuʿ bi'l-ladhdhāt*).[5] Further, Plato defines oligarchy as "a society where it is wealth that counts and in which political power is in the hands of the rich, while the poor have no share in it" (*Republic* 550c): this is what appears as the city pursuing wealth in al-Fārābī. What he called it is not clear, however. Oligarchy is translated "the leadership of the few" (*riyāsat qalīlīn*) in the Arabic version of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter *NE*),[6] and, strangely, "the leadership of vileness" (*khasāsat al-riyāsa*) in the Arabic version of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1360a, 1365b, 1366a).[7] The strange term was used by al-Fārābī too, as will be seen, but not in this passage, where no name is given. Nor is any other imperfect aim or constitution mentioned, but it is obvious that the list is not meant to be complete.

It would be reasonable to infer that in this passage we are seeing al-Fārābī at the beginning of his career as a political thinker. He is assimilating Plato's concepts, not yet adding or changing anything, simply learning along with the students to whom he is presenting the material.

(2) *Fuṣūl*, Second Passage

We hear more about the imperfect regimes further on in the *Fuṣūl*, where we are told that some people hold the aim of kingship (*mulk*) and government (*tadbīr al-mudun*, lit. the administration of cities) to be high status, honour,

5 S. Pines (1971), "The Societies Providing for the Bare Necessities of Life according to Ibn Khaldūn and the Philosophers," *Studia Islamica* 34, pp. 132 sq.

6 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1160b = Arisṭūṭālis (1979), *Al-Akhlāq*, ed. ʿA. Badawī, Kuwait, p. 294.

7 M.C. Lyons (ed.) (1982), *Aristotle's Ars Rhetorica, the Arabic Version*, 2 vols., Cambridge, vol. 1, p. 21, 40–41.

and power. People who prefer honour for its own sake will organize their city so as to enable honour to be pursued in it, by the practice of benevolence or the accumulation of wealth or power, depending on what the source of honour is locally held to be. He observes that among some it is descent. But there are also people who hold wealth to be the | highest good in itself, not simply a means to 194
other things such as honour; they too will arrange their city so as to enable what they consider the highest good to be pursued in it, and they are the people of "vile (or petty, trivial, frivolous) leadership" (*khasāsat al-riyāsa*),[8] i.e. oligarchy, now identified by the name given to it in the Arabic *Rhetoric*. Still others, we are told, think that the ultimate aim of government should be the enjoyment of pleasure (*al-tamattuʿ bi'l-ladhdhāt*), or they opt for a combination of all three objectives (§ 28/31). Combinations of this type are the only form in which al-Fārābī knew the mixed constitution.

Al-Fārābī is still learning, but his primary source here is Aristotle.[9] The honour regime is timocracy, translated *riyāsat al-karāma* in the Arabic version of Aristotle's *NE* (1160a),[10] and possibly also in the *Republic* available to al-Fārābī. To Plato, timocracy (or timarchy) was "the ambitious society," its salient features being features such as "ambition and the competitive spirit" (545b, 548c; the model was Sparta); but this is unlikely to have been helpful to al-Fārābī, given that competition and ambition are prevalent in most societies. He distinguished it from other constitutions with reference to Aristotle's concept, explored in the opening chapters of the *NE*, of the absolute good as something chosen and desired for itself rather than as a means to something else: if the inhabitants of timocracies competed for wealth and power, it was only because they regarded such things as sources of honour. It is not clear whether he would still classify all these imperfect regimes as virtuous (*fāḍila*) in the sense of devoted to more than necessities. What he does indicate is that he regarded timocracy as the best of them, a view he voices elsewhere as well.[11] Those who sought to achieve honour by benevolence were the "chiefs of honour and the

8 Cf. al-Fārābī (1964), *Kitāb al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya al-mulaqqab bi-mabādiʾ al-mawjūdāt*, ed. F.M. Najjār, Beirut, p. 97, 9, where bedouin will kill for *ashyāʾ khasīsa*, clearly meaning trivial, petty goods.

9 Cf. Aristotle, *NE* 1095b sq. = *al-Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, pp. 59–61 on pleasure, wealth and honour in contrast with the contemplative life, also reflected elsewhere in the *Fuṣūl* (below, n. 12).

10 Arisṭūṭālis, *al-Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, p. 293. It does not seem to be mentioned in the *Rhetoric*.

11 Cf. below, on the *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*. It is in line with Aristotle, *NE* 1095b = *Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, p. 60.

most virtuous of leaders" (*ruʾasāʾ al-karāma wa-afḍal al-ruʾasāʾ*), but not even they were called kings by the ancients, he says, meaning that even they fell short of being philosophers.

(3) *Fuṣūl*, the Remaining Passages

We encounter a constitution labelled virtuous (*fāḍila*) in other sections of the *Fuṣūl* too, but it no longer stands for all cities devoted to more than necessities, only for | the perfect type; all others are now called *jāhilī*, "ignorant" (§ 87 f./92 f.), or (just once) "corrupt" (*fāsida*, § 88/93), while its inhabitants are characterized as sinful (*al-fussāq*, 73/78, also just once). An ignorant man is someone who does not know about happiness after death, we are told (§ 73/78). This fits the nature of the regimes devoted to the acquisition of pleasure, wealth or power and honour, the standard aims of non-philosophical people in the *Fuṣūl*.[12] One such regime, *siyāsat al-taghallub*/*taghallubiyya*, "the regime of domination," is pronounced the worst of all (§ 88/93). By origin, this is clearly tyranny, called *taghallub* in the Arabic version of the *NE*[13] and deemed the worst regime by Plato and Aristotle too,[14] though it is not clear exactly how it is envisaged here. Dunlop takes it to be a polity of conquest, which is certainly one of its facets elsewhere.

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Clearly, al-Fārābī has now started working with the classification he learnt from Plato: a new rubric has been introduced for regimes pursuing higher goods other than that regarded as the highest by al-Fārābī himself. His choice of the term *jāhilī* (ignorant) for this rubric is extremely apt, given that the ends of the imperfect constitutions were worldly goods of one kind or another and that every educated Muslim had heard of *jāhilī* (i.e. pre-Islamic) Arabia. Labelled *jāhilī*, the imperfect regimes were instantly recognizable as barbarous, pagan, and devoid of belief in afterlife.

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12 In addition to the previous paragraphs, see ed. Dunlop/Najjār, § 36/39 (wealth, pleasure and honour, the three inferior objectives in Aristotle, *NE* 1095b sq. = *Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, pp. 60 sq.), § 52/56 (love of honour, domination and greed).

13 Arisṭūṭālis, *al-Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, p. 294, 1, 8; cf. Dionysius *al-mutaghallib* (= the tyrant) in Mubashshir ibn Fātik (in Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (1884), *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, ed. A. Müller, Königsberg, vol. 1, p. 50). The translators of the *Rhetoric* mysteriously opted for *fitna* and *fitna wa-haraj* (Lyons, *Aristotle's Ars Rhetorica*, p. 41, 8, 12; p. 62, 20).

14 Plato, *Republic* 544c, 576e; Aristotle, *NE* 1160a = *Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, pp. 293 sq.

(4) *Iḥṣā' al-ʿulūm*

Moving on to the *Iḥṣā'*, we briefly encounter the distinction between virtuous and ignorant regimes again, with two examples of the latter type. One is oligarchy, called *riyāsat al-khissa*, the leadership of vileness (or triviality, frivolity), along the lines of the Arabic *NE*; the other is timocracy, known as before as *riyāsat al-karāma*. All other regimes are similarly known by whatever aim they pursue, we are told, but no further details are given.[15]

(5) *Kitāb al-Milla* and *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* 196

The *Kitāb al-Milla* distinguishes between virtuous and *jāhilī* (ignorant, pagan) leadership and gives five examples of the latter: the minimalist regime pursuing mere necessities (*al-khayr al-ḍarūrī*) and those pursuing wealth (*yasār*), pleasure (*ladhdha*), honour (*karāma wa-jalāla*) and domination (*ghalaba*). Of Plato's regimes, only democracy is still missing.

But in addition we now have two new types of imperfection, the leadership of error (*riyāsat al-ḍalāla*) and that of deception (*riyāsat al-tamwīh*). These regimes differ from the *jāhilī* or pagan ones in that they rest on familiarity with true happiness. In theory they are pursuing it, they just fail to do so in practice, in slightly different ways. In the regime of error, the leader thinks of himself as virtuous and wise and his followers agree, but both are wrong; both believe themselves to be pursuing virtue, i.e. the theoretical and practical perfection which will allow them to achieve immortal bliss, but they are not. In the regime of deception, on the other hand, the leader knows very well that he is not guiding his subjects to virtue, though they themselves believe that he is; he is deceiving them in order to gain *jāhilī* goods (such as wealth, power and fame). In other words, he is an impostor. He strings people along, claiming that they will achieve eternal happiness by following him, and they are duped.[16]

Clearly, al-Fārābī is still thinking actively about imperfect aims in life: the pagan conceptions of the highest good did not suffice to capture the errors

15 Al-Fārābī (1949), *Iḥṣā' al-ʿulūm*, ed. ʿU. Amīn, 2nd ed., Cairo, p. 103; tr. (chap. 5 only) F.M. Najjār (1963), "Alfarabi, *The Enumeration of the Sciences*," in R. Lerner and M. Mahdi (eds.), *Medieval Political Philosophy: a Sourcebook*, New York, p. 25.

16 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Milla*, in M. Mahdi (ed.) (1968), *Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, Kitāb al-Milla wa-nuṣūṣ ukhrā*, Beirut (French tr. in D. Mallet (tr.) (1989), *Farabi, Deux traités philosophiques: l'Harmonie entre les opinions des deux sages, le divin Platon et Aristote et De la Religion*, Damascus), § 1.

he saw around him; new rubrics had to be added to illustrate the defects of the societies based on belief systems which included afterlife. The imperfect regimes he has added here seem to be envisaged as the outcome of a process he describes in the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*. Here we are told that a philosophy which has not yet been put on a sound, demonstrative footing may be infected with false opinions without anyone noticing, due to the oratorical, dialectical or sophistic arguments still employed in its elaboration; such a system of thought may be no more than a *falsafa maẓnūna aw mumawwaha*, a presumed philosophy or one positively embellished to give it an appearance of truth. If a religion (which is simply a popularized version of philosophy) restates the truths of such a philosophy, the images disseminated to the masses (by the lawgiver prophet
197 founding a new community) will be even further from the truth: it | will be a corrupt religion (*milla fāsida*) without anybody knowing.[17] One would assume the regime of error (*riyāsat al-ḍalāla*) to come about when a lawgiver prophet preaches such a *milla fāsida*, a corrupt religion which, unknown to everyone, reflects a presumed rather than a true philosophy. It is probably also to the societies resulting from this process that al-Fārābī alludes in the one passage of the *Fuṣūl* in which he speaks of corrupt regimes (*al-siyāsāt al-fāsida*), declaring that the virtuous man living there must emigrate: the virtuous man is envisaged as the only person who knows them to be wrong.[18]

The regime of deception (*riyāsat al-tamwīh*), on the other hand, can reasonably be supposed to have its origin in a religion based on a *falsafa mumawwaha*, a false philosophy consciously embellished by the founder to hide its defects, though al-Fārābī does not discuss this possibility in the *Ḥurūf*. The reference is probably to pseudo-prophets, a concept of major importance in al-Fārābī's time, as will be seen. Of both types of regime it may be said that they take us to things wrong with conceptions of the truth in al-Fārābī's own monotheist world, more precisely to errors connected with religion.

17 Al-Fārābī (1969), *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, ed. M. Mahdi, Beirut, § 147: English tr. in L. Berman (1974), "Maimonides, the Disciple of Alfārābī," *Israel Oriental Studies* 4, pp. 175 sq. Compare Emma Gannagé's paper in this volume [Ed.: "Y a-t-il une pensée politique dans le *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* d' al-Fārābī?," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57, 2004, pp. 229–257].

18 Al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl*, ed. Dunlop/Najjār, § 88/93. He may have in mind monotheist religions such as Christianity and some people's understanding of Islam (see below, n. 102; chart 1, n. 1).

(6) *Al-Madīna al-fāḍila*

Here all the constitutions inherited from antiquity are identified in full. There are six of them. Some of them have the same names as before: thus the cities of necessity (*ḍarūra*), honour (*karāma*) and domination (*taghallub*). But that of pleasure, previously identified with reference to its pursuit of *al-tamattuʿ bi'l-ladhdhāt*, enjoyment of pleasure, now appears under the name *madīnat al-khissa wa'l-suqūṭ*, the city of vileness (or frivolity) and baseness; and oligarchy, formerly named *riyāsat al-khissa* or *khasāsat al-riyāsa*, now appears as the city of *nadhāla*, which also means vileness. The reasons for this change are hard to divine. The sixth regime is democracy, which makes its first appearance here under the name of *al-madīna al-jamāʿiyya*, roughly the city of the community/majority. Presumably, this is what it was called in his translation of the *Republic*, for it is rendered as *riʾāsat al-ʿawāmm*, "the leadership of the plebs," in the Arabic *NE* and transliterated as *dīmūqrāṭiyya* in the *Rhetoric*.[19] Democracy is briefly identified as a city in which | all aim to be free and to do whatever they 198
fancy. All these cities are *jāhilī*, pagan, in the sense of never having heard about true happiness (*MF*, 15, § 17).[20]

The change of nomenclature apart, this is new only in its systematic coverage, but a great deal has happened to the imperfect regimes devoted to monotheist aims. There are now three of them, the sinful (*fāsiqa*), the changed (*mubaddala*), and the erring (*ḍālla*) (*MF*, 15, § 19). We also encounter a new category of individuals or groups who do not fit in where they live and who are labelled *nawābit*, "sprouts" or "weeds" (*MF*, 15, § 15). No further information is given about them here, however (we shall meet them again in the *Siyāsa madaniyya*). Of the three monotheist cities we are told that their kings are unlike those of the virtuous city (*MF*, 15, § 20), presumably meaning that they are normal kings (i.e. concerned with power rather than salvation) or that in so far as they are more, they are all promoting false beliefs. But for the rest the cities differ.

The sinful (*fāsiqa*) city is one in which people know the truth, but act as if they do not.[21] In Walzer's translation they are wicked or even (in the com-

19 Arisṭūṭālis, *al-Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, pp. 293sq., 294, 13 (1160a, 1160b); Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1360a, 1365b, 1366a (Lyons, *Aristotle's Ars Rhetorica*, p. 21, 23; p. 40, 24; p. 41, 11).

20 References are to the edition and translation of R. Walzer (1985), *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State. Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī's mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, revised text with introduction, translation, and commentary, Oxford.

21 According to Ibn Rushd, al-Fārābī also operated with an imperfect regime to the oppo-

mentary) criminal, but all that is wrong with them is that they are not behaving in accordance with their own convictions. Their views are the same as those of the virtuous city, they are fully aware of the nature of true happiness, God, the active intellect, and the like, so one takes them to be philosophers. But their acts are like those of *jāhilī* cities (*MF*, 15, §19), meaning that they are worldly-minded. One would assume al-Fārābī, known for his abstemious way of life, to have in mind courtly philosophers competing for positions as boon companions, doctors or astrologers to rulers, amassing wealth and mouthing conventional pieties where required.[22] At all events, he has a particular loathing for these sinners, whom he sees as the source of the perversions resulting in the changed and erring cities (cf. below), and whom he condemns to a painful afterlife: unlike the inhabitants of ignorant polities, they will not simply be annihilated when they die; rather, their souls will survive, thanks to their knowledge of the truth, but they will suffer great distress, thanks to their sin-
199 ful behaviour |(*MF*, 16, §8). He says the same in the *Fuṣūl* in the one paragraph mentioning cities of sinners (*fussāq*; they are "unrighteous" in Dunlop's translation). The sinner is here said to be afraid of death, not just because he regrets losing the good things of this life, but also because he sees happiness in the hereafter escape him—for unlike *jāhilī* people, he knows that there is life after death.[23]

The changed (*mubaddala*) city is one that used to be virtuous in both theory and practice, but which has been corrupted in respect of both (*MF*, 15, §19). Walzer labels it the city "which has deliberately changed," but again he goes too far. The inhabitants of such cities are not aware of having gone astray, and they will simply perish when they die, as will all inhabitants of ignorant cities. The same may be true of their leader. He may however also be a sinner from a city of *fussāq* who has misled them deliberately, and in that case he

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site effect, namely one in which people acted right even though their views were wrong, strangely labelled "imamic." This seems to be a garbled version of one of the four forms that the virtuous regimes could take; see P. Crone (2003), "What Was al-Fārābī's 'Imamic' Constitution?," *Arabica* 50, pp. 306–321 [Ed.: included as article 11 in the present volume].

22 Al-Fārābī would have been horrified by the view of philosophers as standing in the service of (worldly) kingship in contrast with prophets, serving God (see Ps.-Plato 1.2.2, in Georges Tamer's paper in this volume [Ed.: "Politisches Denken in pseudoplatonischen arabischen Schriften," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57, 2004, pp. 303–335]. But Walzer understands the passage differently (see Walzer, *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State*, p. 455).

23 Al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl*, ed. Dunlop, §73.

will suffer a miserable afterlife (*MF*, 16, § 10). This city is clearly related to the regimes of error and deception (*riyāsat al-ḍalāla* and *al-tamwīh*) in the *Milla* (above, no. 5). In the regime of error described in the *Milla*, neither the leader nor the followers know that they are misguided, which is also a possibility envisaged here. In the regime of deception described in the *Milla*, the leader is an impostor of the city-founding type (i.e. a false prophet), which is not quite what is envisaged here, for the sinner who deliberately misleads his subjects here is not the actual founder of the city, merely someone who changes it for the worse. The difference may not matter much, however. Here as there al-Fārābī is struggling with what he sees as the errors of co-religionists whom he recognizes as upright and devout. Their leaders have duped them knowingly or unknowingly, from the start or at a later stage: the key point is that such people are innocent victims.

It is in the third city, confusingly labelled the erring city (*al-madīna al-ḍālla*), that we meet the city-founding impostor from the *Milla* again. It would have been easier if al-Fārābī had once more called it something to do with deception (*al-tamwīh*), especially as it is hard to see the reasons for the change; maybe he was losing track of his own complicated nomenclature. In any case, he does say that this city is led by a man who falsely claims to have received revelation and who uses deception (*tamwīh*), trickery (*mukhādaʿāt*) and delusion (*ghurūr*) to make his way. In other words, he is a pseudo-prophet using sleight-of-hand to raise pseudo-miracles. It is by following such a man that people come to pursue otherworldly happiness without having any chance of achieving it. As in the *riyāsat al-tamwīh*, all their beliefs about God, the active intellect and other things are wrong from the start, for | the leader's claim to receive revelation is 200
false (*MF*, 15, § 19, cf. above, no. 5). The swindler is a member of the sinful city, meaning that he once knew the truth and that he has perverted it for worldly aims: he will be punished by otherworldly misery. As usual, the ignorant victims will simply perish (*MF*, 16, § 9).

The concept of the pseudo-prophet has a long history in the ancient world and figures prominently in pagan polemics against Judaism and Christianity in antiquity, when philosophically inclined people would dismiss Moses and Jesus (among many others) as mere tricksters who used magic to impress people and make money out of them. This is also one of the ways in which the Prophet's claim to prophetic status is countered by his opponents in the Qurʾān. The argument had acquired fresh importance in the tenth century, when some philosophers had once more taken to rejecting prophets (and lesser religious leaders too) as swindlers. The two best examples are al-Sarakhsī (d. 286/899) and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925), who both dismissed prophets as mere tricksters, revealed religion as illusory, and miracles as mere sleights-of-

hand.[24] But this is clearly not what al-Fārābī is arguing here. On the contrary, he distances himself from this view in another passage, in which he tells us that some people reject all the symbols (i.e. revealed religion) as false coinage because they do not realize that there are two levels of truth; they assume the symbols to be a representation of the truth itself, so they take the genuine objections one can raise to them to mean that they are false and that the man who brings them is a trickster (*mukhādiʿ*) in search of power and the like (*MF*, 17, § 6). Al-Fārābī would have none of these views. The prophets were not swindlers to him, but on the contrary great philosophers with intellects so developed that they received what was popularly known as revelations. His impostors were religious leaders of a lesser kind.

If he had concrete examples in mind, one would assume the leaders of the Ismailis to have been among them. Like the philosophers, the Ismailis seemed to downplay the prophets by vaunting bearers of alternative (originally Gnostic, later philosophical) knowledge, namely their imams; and some Ismailis were said to have cursed all prophets as impostors in Baḥrayn in 319/931, some twenty years before al-Fārābī's death, when they welcomed their imam and messiah as a manifestation of God on earth.[25] To the Sunnis, Ismailis thus came across as sharing the views of radical philosophers such as Abū Bakr al-Rāzī; the philoso-
201 phers had concocted their | outrageous arguments for Shīʿite consumption, *bi-ṭarīq al-tamwīh*, by means of deception, as al-Ghazzālī put it, claiming that this was how the Ismaili heresy was born.[26] Al-Fārābī is trying to distance himself from that image, too. His overall message is that true philosophers are *not* in the business of attacking revealed religion, that on the contrary they are fully aware of the difference between genuine prophets, wrongly impugned by some erring philosophers and Ismailis, and mere impostors such as al-Muqannaʿ and other famous heresiarchs who established religious communities by *tamwīh* and in whose ranks al-Fārābī probably included the leaders of the Ismailis themselves.[27] He condemns all such impostors to terrible afterlives.

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24 See al-Birūnī in F. Rosenthal (1943), *Aḥmad b. aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Saraḫsī*, New Haven, p. 51; S. Stroumsa (1999), *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam*, Leiden, pp. 93 sqq.

25 H. Halm (1991), *Das Reich des Mahdi*, Munich, pp. 230 sqq. (English tr., id. (1996), *The Empire of the Mahdi*, Leiden, pp. 257 sqq.).

26 Al-Ghazzālī (1993), *Faḍāʾiḥ al-bāṭinịyya*, Amman, p. 24 (chap. 3, section 2; reproduced in I. Goldziher (1916), *Streitschrift des Ġazālī gegen die Baṭinijja-Sekte*, Leiden, p. 43 n. 1).

27 This is so whether or not Daiber is right to see his political thought as influenced by theirs (H. Daiber (1996), "Political Philosophy," in S.H. Nasr and O. Leaman (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, London and New York, pp. 848 sq.). It is true that the Ismaili substratum that Daiber discerns in al-Fārābī's political thought is so large that the simplest

(7) *Al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*

The six pagan cities reappear in full in the *Siyāsa madaniyya*, where they are discussed at considerable length along with two wrong constitutions of other kinds, plus people without political organization of their own, mostly the above-mentioned *nawābit*, but also humans of a beastly nature (*al-bahīmiyyūn*).[28] The ignorant cities bear much the same names as in the preceding work. The first is the minimalist city or society (*al-madīna al-ḍarūriyya*, *al-ijtimāʿ al-ḍarūrī*), in which people cooperate to acquire the necessities of life by agriculture, pastoralism, hunting or for that matter robbery, or by a combination of such activities.[29] Next comes the base city or society (*madīnat al-nadhāla*, *ijtimāʿ ahl al-nadhāla*), Plato's oligarchy, in which people cooperate in order to procure wealth over and above the minimalist level, seeking to accumulate as much of it as they can while spending as little as possible on necessities. They do this on the basis of the same occupations as in the necessity city, but with the addition of commerce.[30] Next we have the city or society of base frivolity (*madīnat al-khissa*, *al-ijtimaʿ al-khasīs*), in which people cooperate to enjoy | 202
sensual pleasures or amusements, or both, which ignorant people rate as the acme of happiness and joy because it requires the accumulation of both necessities and wealth to come about.[31] Al-Fārābī is clearly thinking in terms of a socio-economic progression here: we start with a society in which all are food producers (unless they are robbers), move from there to one in which some leave the land to engage in commerce and trade, and end in an unproductive society in which all are living off other people's labour, like the elite in al-Fārābī's own Baghdad. But the third stage could also be reached by conquest.

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explanation for it would be that al-Fārābī had once been an Ismaili himself; but even if that is accepted, he clearly is not writing as one. In my own view, the similarities between Ismaili and Farabian thought are better explained as parallel developments of the same heritage, and there is no reason to think that al-Fārābī was, or ever had been, a Shīʿite of any kind: see P. Crone (2004), *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, Edinburgh, p. 182; and also Nelly Lahoud in this volume [Ed.: "Al-Fārābī: On Religion and Philosophy," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57, 2004, pp. 283–301].

28 All are listed at al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 87, English tr. F.M. Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," in Lerner and Mahdi (eds.), *Medieval Political Philosophy*, pp. 41 sq.

29 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 88 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," pp. 42 sq.

30 Ibid., pp. 88 sq. = p. 43.

31 Ibid., p. 89 = p. 43.

People who indulged in pleasure would usually grow effete and lose their irascible faculty, but it was also possible for the irascible faculty to be placed at the service of the appetitive faculty, he observed, switching from socio-economic to psychological analysis; this, he said, could be seen in steppe and desert dwellers such as the Turks and the Arabs, whose nobles (*ashrāf*) were much given to sensual pleasures and conquest alike.[32]

The fourth constitution is timocracy (*al-madīna al-karāmiyya*, *ijtimāʿ al-karāma*), in which people cooperate in order to acquire honour.[33] They do so by pursuing one of the objectives of the constitutions already discussed, i.e. necessities, wealth or pleasure, or that of a constitution to come, namely domination; but they pursue them as means to honour, and the rulers may do so to the point that they will give away the goods they obtain because honour is all they want for themselves.[34] The honour regime is thus a nobler version of the other four. It may be from another city that the honour comes, but the citizens may also honour one another, either equally or unequally. In the first case they exchange equal amounts of honour at different times in return for different services, an odd idea which seems to be designed to allow for honour in a democracy. In the second case, the unequal exchange results in the formation of a hierarchy. A hierarchy based on honour will resemble one based on virtue, especially when it is benefaction to others that is the source of honour, and for this reason al-Fārābī deems timocracy to be the best of the ignorant regimes.[35] The ruler will collect the wealth with which he confers benefits on his subjects through taxation or conquest, retaining a certain amount for himself to be spent on magnificent buildings, clothing and other things held to magnify his
203 position; he will also designate a successor to ensure the survival of his | fame. In effect, then, a timocracy is simply a normal kingdom of the best type, that is to say one in which government is exercised for the benefit of the subjects rather than the king himself.

In Aristotle, kingship (Ar. *mulk*) degenerates into tyranny (Ar. *taghallub*).[36] In al-Fārābī, where no attention has been paid to the transformation of regimes so far, it is timocracy which does so. More precisely, al-Fārābī says that excessive

32 Ibid., pp. 102 sq. = p. 52.

33 Ibid., pp. 89 sqq. = pp. 43 sqq.

34 Ibid., p. 92 = p. 45. Honour can also be based on noble ancestry, but the ancestors will have acquired their nobility by procuring necessities, wealth, pleasure or power, as we are explicitly told (ibid., p. 91 = p. 44).

35 Ibid., pp. 93 sq. = p. 46 (where the translation is not quite right).

36 Aristotle, *NE* 1160b = *Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, p. 294, 8.

love of honour will turn a timocracy into a city of despots (*madinat al-jabbārīn*), which in its turn is apt to turn into a city or society of domination (*madīnat/ijtimāʿ al-taghallub*).[37] Neither constitution is exactly the same as tyranny, but tyranny forms part of both.

In a city or society of domination, we are told, people cooperate to secure power for its own sake, the three basic modes of power being killing people, enslaving them and taking their property, all of which may be done either by stealth or by open confrontation (the two ways in which people kill and enslave animals, as noted elsewhere).[38] The starting point for such a city is a situation in which all the inhabitants love power. When all of them are crude, cruel and irascible men much given to sensual over-indulgence (after the fashion of Turkish and Arab nomads), they are enemies of everybody else and think that they should dominate everything and everybody. They will direct their energy at outsiders and conquer them, and if they proceed to live as neighbours of their victims in the same city, they will form a city of domination in respect of half the population (*madīnat al-taghallub fī niṣfihā*)—what we could call a conquest society. The ruling stratum may be either egalitarian or ranked, al-Fārābī says.[39] The rulers' need for cooperation stops them treating each other as callously as they do outsiders, but their competition may lead to a situation in which one man dominates everybody else with the help of followers who will hand over everything they take in return for being maintained by him, like hunting dogs and falcons. All others will be reduced to slaves of this man and till the soil or trade without any power over anything, themselves included. This is a city of domination in respect of the ruler alone (*madīnat al-taghallub bi-malikihā faqaṭ*)—what we could call tyranny.[40]

The city of domination thus comes in several versions, but all pursue power 204
as an end in itself, and this is what distinguishes them from other societies, in which power is sought as a means to other things, such as necessities, wealth, pleasure or honour. According to al-Fārābī, many people would apply the term "city of domination" to societies of the latter kind as well, but he would prefer not to, for at best they are cities of domination in a different sense. There

37 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 94, 3 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 46. In Plato, it is democracy that degenerates into tyranny (Republic 562a).

38 Ibid., p. 94 = pp. 46 sq.; compare *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 18, § 12; al-Jāḥiẓ (1938–1958), *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. ʿA.-S.M. Hārūn, Cairo, vol. I, p. 44.

39 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 96 (for *al-ijtimāʿ* in line 2, read *al-taghallub*) = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," pp. 47 sq. (for "association" in line 8 up, read "domination").

40 Ibid., p. 95, 4–6; p. 96, 7–15 = pp. 47 sq.

are three possibilities, he says, namely that power is being pursued as an end in itself, that both power and other things are being pursued as such ends in themselves, and that power is being used as a means to other things alone. (The copyists mixed up these three possibilities with the three that have already been discussed, i.e. a city dominant in respect of all inhabitants, half the population, or just one man).[41] Where power is seen as a means to other things, people will not use force if they can get what they want in other ways; they may even refuse to use it unless it positively enhances their noble characteristics; and if they win, they will use as little as possible against the defeated population. They may also fight *jihād*, i.e. war with a high moral purpose, without wanting any domination at all when they win.[42] People who love honour will behave in some of these ways, he says, but most cities of domination (*mudun al-taghallubiyya*) are cities of despots (*mudun al-jabbāriyyīn*) rather than timocracies.

So here we have the city of despots again, once more without further explanation, but it is fairly clear now what is going on. Those who pursue power as an end in itself and those who pursue both power and other things as ends in themselves (groups one and two of his confusing scheme a couple of lines higher up) are being put together under the label of "despots" and contrasted with those to whom power is a means to other things (group three). What al-Fārābī is really trying to say is that most people use force in satisfaction of their own, selfish aims (groups one and two), whereas a few use it to achieve higher objectives (group three). "Despots" are all those who are out to please themselves: they are pursuing coercive power because they like wielding it and/or because they can use it to obtain base things such as necessities, wealth, and carnal pleasures. By contrast, devotees of honour will (or at least may) use it to secure benefits for others, and the same is true of people striving for virtue, who are not explicitly mentioned here, but who are alluded to in the reference to *jihād*. In other words, al-Fārābī is saying that it was a mistake to apply the term "city of domination" to societies pursuing necessities, wealth, pleasure, power and honour, as so many people did, for the term should in his view
205 be reserved | for societies in which power was pursued for its own sake, but one could indeed call all or most such societies "cities of despots," since all or most of them debased power by pursuing it in satisfaction of their own desires instead of placing it in the service of morally worthy aims.

41 The gloss at p. 97, lines 4 sq. is mistaken and the text is in disarray.

42 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, pp. 96, 17–98, 5 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," pp. 48 sq.

He uses the concept of despotism again in another context, where he mentions that cities devoted to wealth or pleasure are apt to feel superior to others, seeing themselves as refined and sophisticated, and dismissing others as crude. If such people have the means to get their wealth and pleasures by force, they are *jabbār*s, he says; if they do not, they are simply stupid.[43] The Būyid and Ḥamdānid elites would presumably fall into the first category: as military men, they liked wielding coercive power and used it to secure wealth and pleasure for themselves. In the second category one suspects that al-Fārābī placed the many Baghdadis who sided with the grammarian al-Sīrāfī in his famous debate with the Christian philosopher Abū Bishr Mattā b. Yūnus in 320/932: politically weak and materially spoilt, most Baghdadis were also too bigoted, as al-Fārābī saw it, to concede that they could learn from the Greeks, or indeed the Christians.[44]

When he says that a timocracy may develop into a city of *jabbārīn*, and then into a city of *taghallub*, he means that a city pursuing honour may initially turn into one in which coercive power is being used to acquire material goods as ends in themselves rather than as an instrument for the acquisition of honour, which resembled virtue in the philosophical sense when it rested on benefaction to others. Once this transformation has taken place, the city may degenerate further into a city of domination of the pure type, in which people use coercive power simply because they like it, whether this is true of all of them, half of them, or just one man.

In such a city, he tells us, people take so keen a pleasure in overcoming and humiliating others that they will not take what they need *unless* it involves the use of force: for example, there are some who will not kill a sleeping man in order to rob him, but who will rather wake him up first. This is clearly a reference to the bedouin, whose code of honour al-Fārābī is here presenting in the worst of lights.[45] | Others, he says, will kill for the most trivial gains, and here 206

43 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 98, 6–17 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 49.

44 See F.W. Zimmermann (1981), *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, Oxford, pp. cxxii sqq.; cf. also pp. cvi sqq., for the relationship between Abū Bishr and al-Fārābī.

45 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 95, 1, misplaced by a line and a half (it should continue the statement ending at p. 94, 15 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 47). Compare A. Musil (1928), *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins*, New York, pp. 495 sq.: a culprit while asleep may not be killed by an avenger, for a sleeping bedouin is as good as dead. The bedouin of the Negev today also consider it disgraceful to kill a sleeping man for vengeance, again on the grounds that he is as good as dead; and

he explicitly gives the Arabs (i.e. bedouin) as an example.[46] It is also the Turks and the Arabs (again meaning nomads/people of nomadic origin) who figured as examples of people who use power as a means to pleasure, making their irascible faculty the servant of their appetites. He clearly detested the Turks and the bedouin who infested his world as upstart rulers, soldiers, warlords, robbers and brigands, and he seems to have found bedouin particularly hard to bear, at least in this work. One wonders if this is what gave rise to the story that he was killed by one. In any case, it is presumably because they irked him so much that he felt impelled to locate them on his map of "cities," thereby starting a line of thinking that was to bear extraordinary fruit in the work of Ibn Khaldūn.

The last ignorant city is democracy, called *ijtimāʿ al-ḥurriyya*, "the society of freedom," *madīna al-jamāʿiyya*, "the city of the community/majority," and *madīnat al-aḥrār*, "the city of the free."[47] Here as in the *Madīna fāḍila*, it is a polity in which everybody is free to do what he wants. People are equal, without any distinction between natives and immigrants; there is no hierarchy of virtue or anything resembling it, and the rulers hold power by the will of their subjects, whose wishes they follow. In truth, there are no rulers and ruled at all. The inhabitants do however honour and obey those who protect their freedom against external enemies, expecting them to live abstemious lives while enabling others to satisfy their desires. Their other leaders are really their equals or inferiors, for some of these leaders are paid and honoured in proportion with the services they render, and therefore not regarded as superior, while others are paid and honoured for doing nothing at all (which makes them inferior in the sense of indebted to their paymasters); leaders of the second type are found either because the inhabitants happen to like them or because their ancestors were rulers.[48] In fact, we are told, the positions of leadership are bought for money in all ignorant polities, but especially in democracies because nobody has a better right to such positions than anyone else, so that when somebody holds office, it is either because people have

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if no vengeance is involved, the victim's group may kill four men of the killer's group or claim quadruple blood-money (S. Bar Zvi (1991), *The Jurisdiction among the Negev Bedouin*, Ministry of Defence, Tel Aviv, p. 95 (Hebrew), brought to my attention with an English summary by Frank Stewart).

46 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 97, 10 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 48.

47 Ibid., p. 88, 3 (reading *wa* for *fī*), pp. 99 sqq. = pp. 42, 50 sqq.

48 Ibid., pp. 99 sq. = p. 50.

allowed him to do so voluntarily or because they have received money or some other compensation from him.[49]

This is somewhat mystifying. Plato does of course identify democracy as a 207
regime of freedom in which everybody can do what he likes,[50] but al-Fārābī must be following other sources in his discussion of the leaders. Those who are being paid for doing nothing may have been ceremonial kings and *pro forma* officials.[51] Those who are paid in proportion with the services they render, thereby retaining their equality with everybody else, were presumably paid magistrates, identified as equal on the basis of a statement such as Aristotle's remark that in a democracy they would be elected in accordance with the egalitarian principle of governing and being governed in turn:[52] some such remark could well have been inserted in al-Fārābī's Arabic version of the *Republic*. But it is hard to see how al-Fārābī squared all this with his odd claim regarding the purchase of office in democracies. This too must rest on a comment inserted by the translator or epitomizer, but the comment must surely have been to the effect that magistrates were *paid* in all imperfect polities, especially in democracies (because offices were open to the poor). Not knowing the real reason why magistrates were paid in democracies, the epitomizer or translator seems to have found the explanation in Plato's statement that in a democracy "there is no compulsion to exercise authority even if you are capable of it," or, as Ibn Rushd renders it, "no one is compelled to undertake any of the useful civic matters":[53] since nobody had a duty to serve, people had to be coaxed into taking office. But al-Fārābī inverts the entire argument: positions of leadership are *bought* with particular frequency in democracies because nobody has a *right* to leadership, so that people only take office when *others* let them do so, voluntarily or in return for *payment*. Somebody seems to have misread a whole string of active forms as passives. It happens easily enough in Arabic (where expressions for buying and selling are also easily confused), but it is still peculiar.

Al-Fārābī's main point regarding the leadership in democracies is that the citizens do not want a truly virtuous man to rule them. Nobody capable of

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49 Ibid., p. 101, 6–11 (reading *mutaṭawwiʿīn* for *mutaṭawwilīn*) = p. 51.

50 Plato, *Republic* 557b.

51 To al-Fārābī, they may have sounded like descendants of the Prophet (suggested by Paul Walker).

52 Aristotle, *Politics* 1279a 13, 1317b 15.

53 Plato, *Republic* 557e; E.I.J. Rosenthal (ed. and tr.) (1956), *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's "Republic"*, Cambridge, p. 93, English tr. p. 230; R. Lerner (tr.) (1974), *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, Ithaca and London, p. 128.

directing them to happiness is likely to become their leader (as proved by the example of Plato, presumably); and if one should do so by accident, they will challenge his leadership, depose or kill him (as proved by the example of Socrates, presumably). The same is true of other cities, he says. For all that, it is in a democracy and a minimalist city that a virtuous regime is most
208 likely to emerge—in a minimalist city probably because it | is virgin ground as far as ideas about the highest good are concerned, and in a democracy because everybody is free to pursue what he regards as the best thing in life, so that all constitutions will be represented in it, including the virtuous one. Everybody likes to live in the democratic city, al-Fārābī says in agreement with Plato, because it is the happiest and most admirable city (in their view, one assumes); people migrate there, mix and multiply, and the result is that the city is patchwork of everything; it is like a variegated cloth with all kinds of figures and colours: even virtuous men will grow up in it. Precisely how they might overcome the problem that their fellow-citizens will oppose, depose or kill them if they rise to the leadership is not explained.[54]

So much for the ignorant polities. The imperfect regimes based on metaphysical systems have been reduced to two, the sinful (*fāsiqa*) and the erring (*ḍālla*) city. Here as in the *Madīna fāḍila*, the sinful city is one in which people have the right beliefs but do not act on them; their aims are *jāhilī*, and they come in as many forms as there are *jāhilī* constitutions.[55] The erring city, on the other hand, is one in which people are given wrong imitations of the highest truth, with wrong prescriptions of how to act, that is to say they follow wrong religions. This city is a broader category here than in the *Madīna fāḍila* in that it seems to include not just communities founded by pseudo-prophets, but also religions changed by gradual corruption or by the preaching of heretics, so that it has absorbed the "changed" constitution of the *Madīna fāḍila*.[56] But not much is said about either city. What really preoccupies al-Fārābī in this work, once he has finished with the pagan cities, is not entire communities guilty of philosophical and/or religious errors, but rather individuals propagating such errors, the *nawābit*.

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54 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, pp. 100 sqq. = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," pp. 50 sqq.; cf. also *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 18, § 18; Plato, *Republic* 557c–d.

55 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, pp. 103 sq. = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 53 (where the translation is misleading).

56 Ibid., p. 104 = p. 53.

Nawābit and *bahīmiyyūn*

The *nawābit* (sprouts, weeds) are people who do not form polities of their own, but rather live as scattered individuals or in loose groups in other cities, in which they are like unwanted growth in fields.[57] They would seem always to be bad. They only appear in the *Siyāsa madaniyya* and the *Madīna fāḍila*, and they are contrasted with the virtuous city in both.[58] In line with this, virtuous people in imperfect | polities are never called weeds, but rather cast as chimaeras, 209
if only in the *Milla*, where both they and their converse, ignorant individuals in virtuous communities, are compared to animals with the head of one species and the feet of another.[59] This is odd, for the term *nawābit* may have its origins in Plato's *Republic*, in which it does stand for virtuous men: philosophers are here said to be produced involuntarily and to grow up of their own accord in societies other than the ideal city that Socrates is construing. This seems to have been preserved in at least one of the Arabic epitomes, for Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1138) later uses the term in its Platonic sense, harmonizing it with al-Fārābī's by having it encompass misfits of both types.[60] This is the second occasion on which we find al-Fārābī inverting a statement in Plato, the first being discussion of offices in democratic polities. In both cases the Andalusians seem to have been better informed. Did he use an epitome of Plato's *Republic* different from theirs?[61]

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57 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, pp. 104 sqq.

58 See al-Fārābī, *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 15, § 15; *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 87, 5 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," pp. 41 sq.; and the reference given above, n. 57.

59 See al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl*, ed. Dunlop/Najjār, § 88/93; *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 16, § 11; *K. al-Milla*, § 14 (ed. Mahdi, pp. 55 sq. = tr. Mallet, pp. 132 sq.).

60 Plato, *Republic* 520b; Ibn Bājja, *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid*, in M. Fakhry (ed.) (1968), *Rasā'il Ibn Bājja al-ilāhiyya*, Beirut, pp. 42 sq. (fols. 166[b], 167[a]); partial tr. L. Berman, "Avempace, *The Governance of the Solitary*," in Lerner and Mahdi (eds.), *Medieval Political Philosophy*, pp. 122–133, pp. 127 sq.; O. Leaman (1980), "Ibn Bājja on Society and Philosophy," *Der Islam* 57, p. 115. M.S. Kochin continues Ibn Bājja's use of the word, inadvertently conveying the impression that al-Fārābī used it too (see M.S. Kochin (1999), "Weeds Cultivating the Imagination in Medieval Arabic Political Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60, pp. 399–416, drawn to my attention by Nelly Lahoud). For a discussion of the terminology, see also I. Alon (1989), "Fārābī's Funny Flora. Al-Nawābit as 'Opposition'," *Arabica* 36, pp. 56–90; W. al-Qāḍī (1993), "The Earliest 'Nābita' and the Paradigmatic 'Nawābit'," *Studia Islamica* 78, pp. 27–61.

61 See the previous note and above, p. 207 [Ed.: p. 295 in the present volume]. Compare also n. 107, where Ibn Rushd has an image of the furious wild beasts from the *Republic* that one does not seem to find in al-Fārābī.

However the development of the term is to be explained, al-Fārābī's *nawābit* would appear always to be monotheists who have gone astray one way or the other rather than pagans ignorant of afterlife. He divides them into numerous subgroups in the *SM*. The first three are guilty of pursuing pagan aims. Unlike the sinners described under the rubric of *mudun fāsiqa*, they do not just engage in acts at variance with their convictions; they also try to persuade themselves and others that their acts are in accordance with the truth—in all three cases apparently meaning the truth as presented in religion. All three, in other words, abuse religion for private gain. Some of them act like virtuous people, but with the intention of achieving honour, wealth or leadership: they are hypocrites or posers. Al-Fārābī calls them *mutaqanniṣūn*, which Mahdi translates as opportunists, but which literally means people who lay
210 traps and ensnare prey.[62] A story about Bajkam (d. 329/941), a | general in al-Fārābī's Baghdad, has it that he was once moved to tears by a Sufi preacher and offered him a thousand dirhams, convinced that the holy man would refuse the gift; when the Sufi took the money, he realized that he had been duped (*ḥīla tammat ʿalayya*) and remarked that "we are all hunters, only our nets are different."[63] One would assume it to be posers of this kind that al-Fārābī has in mind. He deals with them in the *Madīna fāḍila* too, again as hunters, but from a rather different angle to which I shall come back.[64] Religious posers and tricksters loomed large in people's minds in al-Fārābī's time,[65] to be immortalized in the *Maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008) and his imitators.

"Weeds" of the second type twist the lawgiver's words with fanciful allegorical interpretations (*taʾwīl*) in order to achieve illicit aims, while those of the third type simply misunderstand the lawgiver's intention, so that they unwittingly act in ways contrary to his law. The former are *muḥarrifa*, a term normally used for people who distort or change their scripture, and the latter are *māriqa*, a term normally applied to the early Muslim sect of militant fundamentalists, the Khārijites. The acts of the second group are *khārija ʿan* the lawgiver's inten-

62 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 104 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," pp. 53 sq.

63 Al-Tanūkhī (1971–1972), *Nishwār al-muḥāḍara*, ed. ʿA. al-Shāljī, Beirut, vol. II, p. 359 (n. 190) = D.S. Margoliouth (tr.) (1922), *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge*, part I, London, p. 294. It was an old metaphor in the Near East; cf. Luke 5, 10, where Jesus tells the fishermen at Lake Gennesaret that henceforth they will be catching men.

64 See al-Fārābī, *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 18, § 12.

65 They also appear in Tamer, "Politisches Denken": see the third treatise of his texts.

tion, as al-Fārābī slyly remarks.[66] He is using old terms of abuse in a new context here, and being highly offensive with it, for the first term referred primarily to Jews and Christians and the second also implied that the people in question had gone beyond Islam: it is famously derived from a statement by the Prophet predicting the appearance of people who would pass through (*yamruqūna*) the religion as an arrow passes through the quarry.[67] Al-Fārābī's target is probably Sufis again, condemned for their antinomianism and generally strange behaviour here: they would twist things so as to make orgies look like acts of piety, as al-Tanūkhī says;[68] they walked about dirty, naked, offending everybody's sense of propriety in this and many other ways.[69]

If the "weeds" of the first three types would all appear to be Sufis, the 211
rest are clearly philosophers who do not understand the true relationship between philosophy and religion (meaning that they do not share al-Fārābī's understanding of it). They appear in the *Madīna fāḍila*, too, and though they are not called "weeds" there, the two presentations go so well together I shall amalgamate them here.

The best of these "weeds" are honest truth-seekers. They reject the imaginative constructs of religion as false coins (*yuzayyifūnahā*), undoubtedly (though this is not explicitly stated) because they do not realize that such constructs should be understood as symbols expressing a higher truth. The way to deal with them is to initiate them into the higher stages of knowledge until they are satisfied. This may involve taking them all the way to the level of the truth (*martabat al-ḥaqq*), where they are taught philosophy (*ḥikma*) and made to understand things as they really are.[70]

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66 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 104 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 54 (where *māriqa* is translated as apostates).

67 A.J. Wensinck and others (1936–1969), *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, 8 vols., Leiden, s.v. *mrq*.

68 Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, ed. al-Shāljī, vol. III, p. 227 (n. 148) = D.S. Margoliouth (tr.) (n.d.), *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge*, parts II and VII, Hyderabad [reprinted from *Islamic Culture* 3–6, 1929–1932], pp. 227 sq.

69 The possibility, raised by Nelly Lahoud, that the reference might be to theologians willing to argue by recourse to lying (*kadhib*), deceptive reasoning (*mughālaṭa*), calumny (*baht*) and violence (*mukābara*) (al-Fārābī, *lḥṣā' al-'ulūm*, ed. Amīn, p. 113 = tr. Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Enumeration of the Sciences*," p. 30) seems remote to me, among other things because these theologians are described as defending the faith, holding all means to be lawful against its enemies and stupid people, whereas the *muḥarrifa* are described as twisting the faith to further their own interests.

70 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, pp. 104 sq. = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 54; *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 17, § 4. It is curious that it is always

Some, however, continue to reject the constructs of religion however high the level at which they are instructed, even that of the truth itself. The trouble with them is either that they are pursuing *jāhilī* aims or else that their intellects are deficient. Those pursuing *jāhilī* aims are trying to get around the law, aware that it stands in their way. They will reject the symbols partly by focusing on their genuine weaknesses (*mawāḍiʿ al-ʿināḍ*) and partly by faultfinding and sophistry (*mughālaṭa wa-tamwīh*), which they also use to discount the truth itself, in particular the concept of happiness (after death, *saʿāda*).[71] In other words, they reject both revealed religion *and* philosophy as understood by al-Fārābī, apparently because they do not believe in the immortality of the soul. This suggests that they were philosophers of the type classified as "naturalists" (*ṭabīʿīyyūn*) by al-Ghazzālī: people who studied animals and plants and who held the soul and the body to die together, a view which supposedly allowed them to indulge in unbridled satisfaction of their own desires.[72]

212 Those suffering from limited intellects continue to reject the religious symbols as counterfeit currency because their (religious) imaginations are deficient, and again taking them to the level of truth will not help, for they cannot understand that either. They think that people who believe themselves to have been guided to it are in fact the victims of deception, and that the alleged guide

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the Ismailis, not the *falāsifa*, who are accused by their opponents of taking their adepts through increasingly infidel stages of thought.

71 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 105 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 54; *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 17, § 5; compare also p. 17, § 3, and Walzer's commentary thereto (equating *mughālaṭa* with *paralogismos*). Both *mughāliṭ* and *mumawwih* are given as translations of *sophistês*, *sophistikos*, transliterated as *sūfisṭāʾī*, in W. Heinrichs (1978), "Der antike Verknüpfung von Phantasia und Dichtung bei den Arabern," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (ZDMG) 128, p. 261 n. 26.

72 Al-Ghazzālī (1959), *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, ed. and tr. F. Jabre, Beirut, p. 19 and French tr. p. 72; English tr. in W.M. Watt (1953), *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī*, Edinburgh, pp. 30 sq. (where they clearly read Galen). Al-Ghazzālī also takes issue with people who say that death is "pure nothing" and hold humans to be as perishable as animals or plants in his *Mīzān al-ʿamal* (ed. S. Dunyā, Cairo 1964, pp. 185 sq.), in his *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayna ʾl-islām waʾl-zandaqa* (ed. S. Dunyā, Cairo 1961, pp. 193, 1–194, 4; German tr. F. Griffel (1998), *Über Rechtgläubigkeit und religiöse Toleranz. Eine Übersetzung der Schrift Das Kriterium der Unterscheidung zwischen Islam und Gottlosigkeit* (*Faysal at-tafriqa bayna l-Islam wa-z-zandaqa*), Zurich, pp. 74, 75; English tr. S.A. Jackson (2002), *On the Boundaries of Theological Tolerance in Islam, Abu Hamid al Ghazali's Faysal al Tafrika*, Oxford, p. 111) and in his *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* (ed. Ḥ. Khadīvjam, Tehran 1380, vol. 1, pp. 65, 113 sqq.; English epitome, C. Field (tr.) (1991), *Al-Ghazali, The Alchemy of Happiness*, revised by E.L. Daniel, London and New York, pp. 23, 41 sqq.).

is either a swindler (*khādiʿ*) in search of honour and power or a man deluded by his own efforts to find the truth (*maghrūr mujtahid*).[73] In short, these "weeds" are philosophers who reject the truth of conventional religion, dismissing all prophets as false.

There is another reference to people who will have none of conventional religion in the *Madīna fāḍila*, in the context of the corrupt (*fāsida*) views of the ancients on which ignorant and erring cities are here declared to be based. One of these ancient views is that there was no God running this world, no spiritual beings monitoring people's acts, no reward or punishment in the hereafter, and no benefit to be derived from worship or renunciation of the good things in life: all claims regarding such things were so many ruses and traps (*ḥiyal*, *makāyid*, *maṣāyid*) devised by those who did not have the ability to take the good things in life by force (*mughālaba*); on the surface they would spurn these things, so that their conduct was described as divine, but this was simply their way to obtain honour, power, property, pleasure or freedom (*jāhilī* aims); just as wild beasts were hunted now openly and now by stealth, so the good things in life could be obtained both by toughness (*muṣālaba*) and by deception.[74]

The swindlers to which this ancient view refers seem to be to posers such as the *mutaqanniṣūn* mentioned before, not, or not just, would-be prophets, for prophets were associated with war, not with working by stealth, and there is no reference to false miracles here. But the view is certainly extreme: *all* religious scholars and ascetics (and perhaps prophets too) are dismissed as tricksters laying traps after the fashion of the Sufi who ensnared Bajkam; *all* are seen as purveying opium to the people in Marx' immortal phrase, the stress here being on the benefits obtained by the dealers rather than the addicts. What is described is a tenth-century version of | Epicureanism. It is close to 213
the views of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, who blamed the religious scholars ("goatbeards," as he called them) for inculcating the superstitions that constituted so-called revealed religion (brought by so-called prophets).[75] But al-Rāzī did believe in reward and punishment by means of reincarnation, and the reference is in any case unlikely to be to him alone. That heaven and hell had been invented by

73 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 105 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," pp. 54 sq. (*mujtahid* omitted from the translation); *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 17, § 6.

74 Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 18, § 1, 12. Nelly Lahoud understands the passage differently (see her paper in this volume [Ed.: Lahoud, "Al-Fārābī"]).

75 In Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (1977), *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, ed. Ṣ. al-Ṣāwī, Tehran, pp. 31 sq.

religious scholars to frighten people was a well-known idea at the time. "For his own sordid ends the pulpit he ascends, and though he disbelieves in resurrection, makes all his hearers quail," as al-Maʿarrī (d. 449/1058) said.[76] Those who held the soul and the body to die together were among the proponents of this view.[77]

Al-Fārābī did not believe the soul to die with the body, or not any more,[78] and he describes the cynical view of religion in order to distance himself from it. But he shared the cynics' contempt for hypocrites and posers, the hunters with their traps and nets who pretended not to care about worldly goods precisely because they wanted them, and this comes across strongly at the end of the passage. When such people succeed, they are celebrated and honoured, he bitterly remarks, whereas people who behave similarly in a genuine desire for the truth are considered failures, or praised in a mocking tone, or encouraged to continue so as to leave more goods for others. This was apparently how he felt he was treated himself. He saw himself as living an ascetic life for the sake of philosophy, not for worldly success, and we have no reason to think otherwise; but success and appreciation clearly would not have come amiss, and this he never achieved.

Not all the "weeds" who dismiss conventional religion are of the above type, however. Al-Fārābī lists another five types, though in effect they boil down to three.[79] All are sceptics of one kind or another. Some suffer from *ḥayra*, scepticism in the sense of inability to tell which religion is true.[80] We are not

76 R.A. Nicholson (ed. and tr.) (1921), "The Meditations of Maʿarri," in his *Studies in Islamic Poetry*, Cambridge, n. 128.

77 Al-Ghazzālī, *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*, ed. Khadīvjam, I, p. 113 = Field, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 41.

78 He is on record as having rejected the concept of afterlife in his lost commentary of Aristotle's *NE* (S. Pines (1979), "The Limitations of Human Knowledge According to al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja and Maimonides," in I. Twersky (ed.), *Studies in Mediaeval Jewish History and Literature*, Cambridge, Mass., pp. 82 sq.).

79 Most manuscripts only list two types before concluding with (or, oddly, shortly before) a statement that the ruler of the city must treat all in a manner apt to cure them (see al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjar, p. 106, note to line 8 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 57 n. 10). The Hyderabad manuscript, however, continues with a further passage (included in both the text and the translation) describing three new types, again ending with a statement showing that the section has come to an end; two of them are variants of a position already mentioned.

80 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 106 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 55 (no. 1). People driven to scepticism by dissatisfaction with the religious symbols are also mentioned in *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 17, § 6.

given any further | details. Others are extreme relativists: they hold the truth 214
to be whatever it seems to be to the individual at any given time.[81] The last group are sceptics in the sense that they do not believe that anything perceived or thought (*yudrak*) is reliable. Some of them do accept that there may be a truth, but hold that nothing reliable has been attained so far;[82] or they see the truth as if in a dream or like things flashing from afar and accept that at least some of those who claim to have attained it have actually done so but insist that they will not reach it themselves—because they do not have the time, the concentration, the capacity for hard work or the intellectual abilities, al-Fārābī says, though this is hardly how they put it themselves. Such people devote themselves to disparaging what has been attained so far, feeling envious of those who may have reached the truth; they will reject it with deceptive arguments (*aqāwīl mumawwaha*), or in other words with sophistry, and dismiss those who may have reached it as innocent victims of delusion or outright liars in search of honour, wealth or the like. Their ignorance and scepticism is a cause of much pain to them, so they seek solace in the pursuit of *jāhilī* aims and fun, sometimes claiming outright that happiness lies in such things, that everybody else is deluded, and that they have reached this conclusion after careful examination of all the positions.[83]

Sceptics are well attested in al-Fārābī's time, and indeed before and after;[84] it was from the ranks of the latter that the extreme relativists were recruited. Such sceptics held that "all things are mere phantasy (*tawahhum*) and conjecture (*ḥisbān*), that people grasp them only in accordance with their own minds (meaning subjectively), and that there is no truth in reality," as one of them is supposed to have declared at the court of the ninth-century caliph al-Ma'mūn.[85] They were called *ḥisbāniyya*, "those who (write off knowledge as) mere conjecture," or *sūfisṭā'iyya*, sophists.[86] When al-Ghazzālī lost faith in his ability to know anything at all, he realized that he had come to adopt the *madhhab al-safasṭa*, the doctrine of the sophists, even though he did not declare

81 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 106 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 55 (n. 3) (not in *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*).

82 Ibid., p. 106 = p. 55 (nos. 2 and 4).

83 Ibid., pp. 106 sq. = pp. 55 sq. (no. 5); cf. also the brief reference to them in *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 17, § 6. For "sophistry," see above, n. 70.

84 J. van Ess (1968), "Skepticism in Islamic Religious Thought," *al-Abḥāth* 21, pp. 1–18.

85 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (1940–1953), *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, ed. A. Amīn and others, 7 vols., Cairo, vol. II, pp. 407 sq.; cited in Van Ess, "Skepticism," p. 1, with the gloss accepted here.

86 See the references in Van Ess, "Skepticism," nn. 3 and 4.

himself to be one.[87] Among the thoughts he entertained in that state was that life is really a dream from which we will wake up when we die, to find everything looking very differently from what it does now.[88] It | may be this truth awaiting us after death that al-Fārābī's sceptics have in mind when they see it from afar, as if in a dream, and grant that it exists while denying that they are going to attain it themselves.

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Al-Fārābī had undoubtedly encountered such people in real life. He is writing from personal experience, as someone who claims to have reached the truth and who cannot bear to see his beautifully tended garden invaded by weeds of so destructive a kind. They ruin wisdom by doing away with all the restraints under which thinking normally operates, as he says at the end of the *Madīna fāḍila*, so that nothing is truer than anything else, but everything is false or alternatively everything is true, nothing at all being impossible.[89] What maddens him is that they reject the truth itself, meaning philosophy, not just conventional religion. They are deadly enemies from within. On top of that they have the nerve to use the very same argument against al-Fārābī as against preachers of false religion, namely that he and his likes are either deceiving themselves or trying to deceive others for the sake of power, money or the like. No wonder that he credits them with envy, laziness, stupidity, and existential pain so bad that it had to be drowned in frivolous amusement.

That leaves us with the people of a beastly nature (*al-bahīmiyyūn*). They figure already in al-Fārābī's account of Plato's philosophy, where they seem to be a blanket category for the members of imperfect polities, for we are here told that Plato investigated whether a man despairing of life in conformity with philosophy should accept a bestial way of life or rather prefer death, as Socrates had done, concluding that death is preferable.[90] Here their beastliness is purely moral. In the *SM*, however, they are savages in terms of social and cultural evolution as well. They are not *madaniyyūn* (literally "civil" or "political"), we are told; in other words, they do not live in communities based on a moral code (*ijtimāʿāt madaniyya*). They may live together, but their groups are mere herds in which they mate by mounting each other (instead of forming permanent pairs); they may also live alone, like predatory animals. Either way,

87 Al-Ghazzālī, *al-Munqidh*, ed. and tr. Jabre, pp. 13 and 65 = Watt, *The Faith*, p. 24.

88 Ibid., pp. 13 and 65 = ibid., p. 23.

89 Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 19, §§ 8 sq.

90 Al-Fārābī (1943), *Falsafat Aflāṭūn*, ed. F. Rosenthal and R. Walzer, London, pp. 18 sq. = M. Mahdi (tr.) (1962), *Alfarabi, Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, New York, "The Philosophy of Plato," § 30 (pp. 63 sq.).

they subsist on uncooked food, grazing like cattle or tearing up their prey after the fashion of the carnivores. They live in the extreme north and south, but may also be found near cities, where the ones of a social disposition should be enslaved while the rest should be treated in the same way as other harmful animals.[91]

Al-Fārābī's beastly people have a long literary ancestry. Numerous Greeks, 216
notably Democritus (c. 460 BC), held humans originally to have lived as scattered individuals or households (like Homer's Cyclopes) or in herdlike groups, devoid of morality, language or amenities of any kind.[92] Al-Fārābī himself mentions this "brutish view" (*al-raʾy al-sabʿī*) of human nature among the corrupt opinions of the ancients: its adherents held human nature still to be fundamentally anti-social.[93] In al-Fārābī's view this was true only of people of the beastly kind. It was after all a commonplace that man was a social/civic (*madanī*) animal by nature, so that an individual incapable of forming association or without need for it would have to be either a wild animal (*sabuʿ*) or a divine being, as Aristotle was remembered to have said:[94] according to al-Fārābī, the ancients would expel such an animal-like person from their cities while deeming the divine man (*al-insān al-ilāhī*) to be the king in truth.[95] Here he specifies that it was only the predatory type that had to be driven off or killed; those who resembled cattle could be used as sources of labour, says, implicitly identifying them with Aristotle's slaves by nature.

One cannot help wondering whether al-Fārābī is venting his dislike of bedouin yet again here, equating them with the beastly people of the predatory type who should be driven from the city when they approach it. Whatever the answer, al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) certainly took bedouin to occupy the position of predatory animals (*al-sibāʿ*) with reference to their love of conquering, killing and enslaving other people. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) voices a similar

91 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 87 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 42.

92 W.K.C. Guthrie (1962–1981), *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Cambridge, vol. II, p. 473; T. Cole (1967), *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*, Cleveland, Ohio, esp. pp. 80 sq.

93 Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 18, § 5.

94 Al-ʿĀmiri (1957–1958), *al-Saʿāda waʾl-isʿād*, ed. M. Minovi, Tehran, p. 150; cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a.

95 Al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl*, ed. Dunlop/Najjār, § 11/12. The super-human being who has no need of the *polis* has here been identified with the man of such outstanding virtue that he would be a god among men and so would have to be either ostracised or obeyed as king (Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a, 1284a, 1288a). Al-Fārābī takes it for granted that the outstanding man should be obeyed, so that it is the beastly man who should be ostracised.

view when he says that man has become social/civic (*madanī*) by nature to the point that the moral character (*akhlāq*) of bedouin, who are not *mutamaddinīn*, i.e. do not live in civilization, does not resemble that of complete persons. Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) also counted the bedouin (including settled cultivators) as pre-*madanī*, but now in a sociological rather than a moral sense: their society was simply rural, prior to the development of cities (here in the literal sense of towns) and the luxury that developed with them.[96]

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Overall

This completes our survey of al-Fārābī's accounts of the imperfect constitutions. The amount of thinking he put into the subject is impressive. He seems to be the first Muslim thinker to have devoted serious attention to Plato's and Aristotle's views on *'ilm madanī*, "political science," now meaning something like "the science of how to live together with other people as a morally upright seeker of the highest truth"; and we see him start on bare ground in his earliest attempts to assimilate Plato's and Aristotle's views, to develop an increasingly elaborate scheme of his own in his subsequent statements. If he kept reformulating his views, it was because he was still thinking. It is hardly surprising if there were inconsistencies in his thought (though it seems to me that there are far fewer than often said): he tried out more approaches, raised more questions, and ran into more problems on the way than could be sorted out by a single man in a lifetime.

This is the picture that emerges if one arranges his statements in the order of complexity and accepts that this is likely to be the rough chronological order too. It is hardly a radical claim, for the *Madīna fāḍila* and *Siyāsa madaniyya* are generally placed towards the end of al-Fārābī's life, while the relative chronology of the *Iḥṣā'*, *Milla* and *Ḥurūf* is obscure.[97] It does however require rejection of Dunlop's view of the *Fuṣūl* as a late work, but then his arguments are hardly

96 Al-Ghazzālī (1990), *Mishkāt al-anwār*, ed. B.S. al-Laḥḥām, Beirut, p. 116 (section III, on those veiled by pure darkness); W.H.T. Gairdner (tr.) (1924), *Al-Ghazzālī's Mishkāt al-anwār* (*The Niche for Lights*), London, p. 90; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1343 H), *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, Hyderabad, vol. II, p. 523; Ibn Khaldūn (n.d.), *al-Muqaddima*, Beirut, pp. 134 sq.; English tr. in F. Rosenthal (1967), *The Muqaddima. An Introduction to History*, Princeton, vol. I, pp. 252 sq., French tr. in A. Cheddadi (2002), *Le Livre des Exemples*, vol. I: *Autobiographie et Muqaddima d'Ibn Khaldun* (Bibliothéque de la Pléiade 490), Paris, pp. 372 sq.

97 For a list placing the *Iḥṣā'* before the *Ḥurūf*, see M. Aouad (1992), "Les fondements de la *Rhetorique* d'Aristote reconsidéré par Fārābī, ou le concept de point de vue immediat et commun," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 2, p. 176.

cogent.[98] Though some passages could well be late,[99] the *Fuṣūl* must date at least in part from al-Fārābī's early career and should perhaps be seen as a compilation of pieces written at different times.

Al-Fārābī's thoughts on imperfect constitutions tell us much about his perception of his own world. The overwhelming impression is of alienation. He lived under rulers he disliked, eclipsed by court philosophers, theologians and jurists that he despised, outraged by the intense competition for wealth and power around him and | even more so by the hypocrisy, the intellectual manip- 218
ulation, the self-serving argumentation and the downright dishonesty with which it was accompanied. Altogether, his impression of court life is remarkably similar to al-Ghazzālī's. Unlike al-Ghazzālī, however, he liked the Sufis no better than anyone else. All his contemporaries struck him as wrong, not least his own co-religionists, the very people whose approval he craved. One begins to sense why no contemporary apart from al-Masʿūdī mentions him: to the many successful people he disliked, he probably came across as disagreeable, and something of a failure.

Al-Fārābī and Late Antiquity

There remains the task of assessing how al-Fārābī's thought about imperfect constitutions relates to the period before and after him. It is notoriously difficult to connect his political thought with that of late antiquity in any precise way. He worked within the general tradition of the Neoplatonist philosophers, and his political thought is in broad agreement with theirs.[100] Contrary to what used to be assumed, they did take an interest in the subject.[101] But there is

98 See his introduction to al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl al-madanī*, ed. Dunlop, pp. 15sq., proposing that there are references to Sayf al-Dawla and the wars with the Byzantines in this work. The *Fuṣūl* is also placed at the end of al-Fārābī's work, after the *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya* and the *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, in Aouad, "Fondements," p. 176.

99 Thus al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl*, ed. Dunlop/Najjār, § 88/93 mentioning corrupt (*fāsida*) cities and § 73/78 mentioning cities of sinners (*fussāq*), for example.

100 D.J. O'Meara (2003), *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Oxford, chap. 14.

101 The reevaluation is the work of D.J. O'Meara. In addition to the works in the previous note and below, n. 119, see id. (1993), "Aspects of Political Philosophy in Iamblichus," in H.J. Blumenthal and E.J. Clark (eds.), *The Divine Iamblichus*, Bristol, pp. 65–73; id. (1999), "Neoplatonist Conceptions of the Philosopher-King," in J. van Ophuijsen (ed.), *Plato and Platonism*, Washington D.C., pp. 278–291; id. (1999), "Plato's *Republic* in the School of Iamblichus," in M. Vegetti and M. Abbate (eds.), *La Repubblica di Platone nella traditione antica*, Napoli, pp. 193–205; id. (1992), "Vie politique et divinisation dans la

little to tie them together at the level of detail. There is an apparent exception in a statement by Simplicius (fl. c. 530), one of the philosophers who moved to the Persian court when Justinian closed the Academy at Athens. According to him, if things get so bad in corrupt polities (*mokhthêrais politeiais*) that the philosopher can no longer keep his self-respect, he must withdraw from public affairs or, if possible, retire to another polity, as Epictetus had done during the tyranny of Domitian (and as Simplicius himself did during the tyranny of Justinian). *Mokhthêros* was a code-word for Christians.[102] In al-Fārābī's usage, corrupt (*fāsida*) polities are those based on wrong metaphysics without anyone knowing, and it is precisely from corrupt cities that the virtuous man must
219 emigrate (*wajabat ʿalayhi al-hijra*), a point made in a passage on the evils | of tyranny (*taghallub*).[103] One would infer that he is drawing on Simplicius here, delighted by the congruence between Greek and Islamic ideas on the question.

But even if this is right, his use of Simplicius was hardly direct. Leaving aside that the commentary on Epictetus does not seem to have been known to the Muslims,[104] the continuations are somewhat different. Simplicius says that if the philosopher cannot leave, he should hide, as though behind a wall, and adopt a low profile, and that on the whole, corrupt polities are bad for the soul, though strong souls can be strengthened by such hardship; but al-Fārābī says nothing about lying low and simply declares that if the virtuous man cannot leave, he is a stranger in the world, wretched in life, and would be better off dead. He adopts a less extreme stance in other works,[105] but there are no obvious signs of familiarity with Neoplatonist discussions in anything else he says on the position of the philosopher in imperfect polities. His statement that virtuous people forced to engage in *jāhilī* acts will not be harmed by it, since

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philosophie neoplatonicienne," in M.-O. Goulet-Cazê and others (eds.), *Chercheurs de Sagesse. Hommage à Jean Pépin*, Paris, pp. 501–510.

102 Simplicius (1996), *Commentaire sur le* manuel *d'Épictète*, ed. I. Hadot, Leiden, p. 314 (Dübner, p. 65, 29 sqq.; lemma 32, 186 sqq.); id. (2002), *On Epictetus' "Handbook 1–26,"* tr. C. Brittain and T. Brennan, Ithaca, N.Y., vol. I, p. 118; A. Cameron (1985), *Literature and Society in the Early Byzantine World*, London, "The Last Days of the Academy at Athens," p. 16. See also O'Meara's paper in this volume [Ed.: "Simplicius on the Place of the Philosopher in the City (*In Epictetum* chap. 32)," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57, 2004, pp. 89–98].

103 Above, n. 17; al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl*, ed. Dunlop/Najjār, § 88/93. Compare Socrates in his *Falsafat Aflāṭūn*, ed. Rosenthal and Walzer, p. 19 = Mahdi, *Alfarabi, Philosophy of Plato*, p. 64.

104 It does not figure in H. Gätje (1982), "Simplikios in der arabischen Überlieferung," *Der Islam* 59, pp. 6–31.

105 See Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 181–183.

it makes them feel discomfort rather than pleasure, is in line with Ammonius' view (c. 490) that "though [the soul] may be forced by tyrants to profess an impious doctrine, she can never be forced to inner assent and to belief."[106] But al-Fārābī nowhere seems to speak of retiring "behind a wall," fleeing from the "impetuous flow" (*trikymia*) that will toss him about, or avoiding the fury of the "wild beasts," let alone of philosophers "gnashing their teeth defiantly and refusing to yield to the tyrant": all these were stock phrases used by the philosophers to describe their relationship with Christian society.[107]

Walzer thought that we should look for al-Fārābī's roots among middle Platonists, or even that his *Madīna fāḍila* was simply a loose paraphrase of a middle Platonic text.[108] This last idea can be discarded, except in the sense that al-Fārābī may have used Galen's (lost) epitome of Plato's *Republic*, just as he may have used Galen's (lost) epitome of Plato's *Laws* for his summary of that work.[109] Pines noted that the idea of Plato's minimalist and well-appointed cities as actual constitutions is found | in the *Didaskalikos* of Alcinous (2nd 220
c.?), but it seems unlikely that al-Fārabī actually used this work, for their terminologies differ. Alcinous calls the minimalist city a regime "without war" (*apolemos*), whereas al-Fārābī calls it one of necessity, using the term found in the *Republic* itself (369d) and displaying no awareness of Plato's idea that such a city would be blessed by the absence of war; and Alcinous labels the city endowed with luxury "feverish" (*phlegmainousa*, Plato's term at 372e), whereas al-Fārābī calls it "revelling in pleasures," which is probably what he found in his Arabic translation (for *tryphôsan polin* at 372e).[110] The chances are that the cities of necessity and luxury appeared as constitutions in the epitome itself.

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106 Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*, ed. Walzer, chap. 16, § 1: Cameron, "Last Days," p. 14.

107 I. Hadot (1978), *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès et Simplicius*, Paris, pp. 38 sq.; Cameron, "Last Days," pp. 15–17; O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, p. 93; id., "Simplicius on the Place of the Philosopher in the City." The wild beasts do however appear in Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Plato's *Republic* (Rosenthal, *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's "Republic,"* p. 64, English tr. p. 183; Lerner, *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, p. 78).

108 See his commentary to his edition of the *al-Madīna al-fāḍila*.

109 D. Gutas (1997), "Galen's Synopsis of Plato's *Laws* and Fārābī's *Talḫīṣ*," in G. Endress and R. Kruk (eds.), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism. Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences dedicated to H.J. Drossaart Lulofs*, Leiden, pp. 101–119.

110 Pines, "Societies Providing For the Bare Necessities," p. 132, with reference to Albinus' *Eisagôgê*, by which he means Alcinous (formerly identified with Albinus), *Didaskalikos* (see Alcinoos (1990), *Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*, introd. and comm. J. Whittaker, tr. P. Louis, Paris, also J. Dillon (tr.) (1993), *The Handbook of Platonism*, Oxford, chap. 34).

His most important teachers probably were not philosophers at all, or even doctors, but rather Christian churchmen. Unlike the Neoplatonist philosophers, the Christians regularly used the word *politeia* in the loose sense of "way of life" or "conduct," especially when this conduct reflected the highest values of the community or individual in question: this is exactly how al-Fārābī used the word, or rather its Arabic equivalents.[111] Christian churchmen, or at least Eusebius (d. 340), also cast Moses as a lawgiver in the Platonic style, having learnt to do so from Hellenized Jews such as Philo and Josephus: al-Fārābī was simply continuing this tradition when he cast the prophets as philosophers founding religious communities.[112] Further, Eusebius described the law given by Moses as an allegorical and symbolic version of the higher truth (now, in his view, available directly to all), very much as al-Fārābī was to describe revealed religion;[113] but the idea of two levels of truth, with the lower level as a symbolic, allegoric or mythological version of the higher, was a commonplace in antiq-
221 uity, and al-Fārābī is likely to have come across it in | many places, including Neoplatonist writings, to which he may be particularly indebted.[114] Eusebius did however also share with al-Fārābī the feature of viewing Plato's ideal ruler through the lens of Hellenistic/Near Eastern ideas about kingship.[115] All in all,

111 See G.W.H. Lampe (1961), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford, s.v., section F; L. Robert, G.W. Bowersock, and C.P. Jones (eds. and trs.) (1994), *Le Martyre de Pionios prêtre de Smyrne*, Washington, D.C., p. 78 (my thanks to Glen Bowersock for these references). Compare also the translation of *politeia* as *sīra* in Aristotle, *NE* 1160a = *Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, p. 293.

112 See Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, book VII in G. Schroeder and É. des Places (eds. and trs.) (1975), *Eusèbe de Césarée, La Préparation évangélique, Livre VII* (Sources chrétiennes 215), Paris, p. 8, 38; book XII, in É. des Places (ed. and tr.) (1983), *Eusèbe de Césarée, La Préparation évangélique, Livres XII–XIII* (Sources chrétiennes 307), Paris, p. 4, 2; p. 19, 1. Compare the paper by Sarah Pearce in this volume [Ed.: "King Moses: Notes on Philo's Portrait of Moses as an Ideal Leader in the *Life of Moses*," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57, 2004, pp. 37–74]. Note also the book by Melito of Sardis (d. c. 190) entitled *Peri politeias kai prophêtôn*, translated *On Christian Life and the Prophets* (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV, in K. Lake (ed. and tr.) (1926), *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History*, books I–V (Loeb Classical Library), Cambridge, Mass., and London, vol. I, p. 26, 2).

113 Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* VII (ed. and tr. Schroeder and des Places), p. 8, 38; XII (ed. and tr. des Places), p. 4, 2; p. 19, 1. Compare Pearce, "King Moses."

114 Thus D.J. O'Meara (2002), "Religion als Abbild der Philosophie. Zum Neuplatonischen Hintergrund der Lehre al-Farabis," in T. Kobusch and M. Erler (eds.), *Metaphysik und Religion: Zur Signatur des spätantiken Denkens*, Leipzig, pp. 343–353.

115 See Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 193–195 (and 34, 40 sq., for earlier manifestations of these ideas in Islam). The work of Themistius, who struck Walzer as a possible

however, it would seem a good idea to widen the search for al-Fārābī's roots to include the Hellenized Jews and Christians who had confronted the problem of how to reconcile prophets and philosophers, divine law and human polities, before him, and whose legacy went into Syriac and Aramaic (and indeed Pahlavi) literature whether the recipients were aware of it or not.

For the most part, however, al-Fārābī's thought about Plato's constitutions seems to rest not on information received from churchmen, Galen, Neoplatonist philosophers, or for that matter orators, but rather on his own thought about Plato's *Republic* as it had come down to him, read in conjunction with other dialogues (notably the *Laws* and the *Statesman*) and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *NE*, the only relevant Aristotelian works that were available to him. His treatment of democracy is an obvious example. He dislikes it because it allows people to be free and equal, which he takes to mean that they blindly follow their own desires, devoid of self-control and discipline. This is in line with Plato's account. He does not use the argument of Proclus (d. 485) that democracy is unworkable because it presupposes that all can achieve virtue,[116] or the view of Salustius (wrote 360s?) that democracy is the opposite of timocracy because it is the common people rather than the rich who hold power in it;[117] he does not in fact seem to know that it had anything to do with the poor at all. Unlike Dio Chrysostom (d. after 120), Synesius (d. 413) and others, apparently including Olympiodorus (d. after 565), he does not regard it as identical with, or likely to degenerate into, mob rule;[118] unlike Malalas (d. 578) and Theophanes (d. 818), he does not equate it with insurrection or confusion (Arabic |*fitna*),[119] and he is 222

source for al-Fārābī, is also suffused by ideas of Hellenistic kingship (O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, p. 207; cf. also John Watt's paper in this volume [Ed.: "Syriac and Syrians as Mediators of Greek Political Thought to Islam," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57, 2004, pp. 121–149]).

116 A.Ph. Segonds (ed. and tr.) (1985–1986), *Proclus, Sur le premier Alcibiade de Platon*, 2 vols. (Collection des Universités de France), p. 255. Similarly Dio Chrysostom, "Third Oration on Kingship," in J.W. Cohoon (ed. and tr.) (1932), *Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 1–11*, London and New York, vol. 1, p. 47.

117 Sal(l)ustius, "On the Gods and the World," tr. in G. Murray (1925), *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, New York, p. 256, where timocracy rather than oligarchy is associated with wealth.

118 Dio Chrysostom, "Third Oration on Kingship," p. 49; Synesius in F. Dvornik (1966), *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*, Washington, D.C., vol. II, p. 701. Olympiodorus identified the "storm" that threatened the philosopher in an imperfect polity with democratic politics (O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, p. 93).

119 G.I. Bratianu (1937), "Empire et 'démocratie' à Byzance," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 37, pp. 88, 90, 91 ("insurrection"); cf. C. Mango and R. Scott (ed. and tr.) (1997), *The Chronicle of*

wholly unfamiliar with the view presented in a fragment on "political science" dating from the reign of Justinian (527–565), in which democracy is a component in the best constitution. He would not have understood how a mixed constitution could be anything other than a corruption of the ideal.[120] He is also innocent of the idea that democracy could be something found among tribal people, as it is in Procopius (d. after 565), who describes the Slavs and the Anti as living in one because they were free to govern themselves.[121] He does not in fact have any idea what a democracy might look like in real life. Much later, when Ibn Rushd applied the concept to the cities he saw around him, it was again on the basis of his own thinking rather than knowledge of the past, and though his understanding was extremely apt, it had nothing to do with democracy in the classical sense of the word.[122]

Al-Fārābī probably had a better sense of what a minimalist city might be in real life, given his insight that it could be a band of robbers. But it did not interest him much. It was the cities devoted to wealth, pleasure, power and honour that he recognized from his own world, and it was these regimes, especially the last two, that he developed along new lines. Here too he is clearly working on his own. It is only when we reach the monotheist constitutions that one begins to recognize an input from works other than Plato and Aristotle, and even here his sources are hard to pin down—in part no doubt because so few attempts have been made.

Al-Fārābī's Constitutions in Later Thought

It is impossible not to wonder what would have come out of al-Fārābī's thought if he had worked in an institutionalized setting with generations of successors to go over his arguments on a regular basis. As it was, he did have successors, but not nearly enough to exhaust the potential of his ideas.

Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813, Oxford, AM 6303, p. 492 = p. 674 ("confusion").

120 A.S. Fotiou (1981), "Dicaearchus and the Mixed Constitution in Sixth-Century Byzantium: New Evidence from a Treatise on 'Political Science'," *Byzantion* 51, pp. 533–547; on this work, see also D. O'Meara (2002), "The Justinianic Dialogue 'On Political Science' and Its Neoplatonic Sources," in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Sources*, Oxford, pp. 49–62; id., *Platonopolis*, pp. 173–184.

121 H.B. Dewing (ed. and tr.) (1924–1928), *Procopius, The History of the Wars, Books 7.36–38* (*Gothic War*), Cambridge, Mass., and London, pp. 14, 18–22.

122 Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 190, 280.

To a modern reader, the most interesting potential in his thought on constitutions is that for a developmental and social-scientific approach to human affairs. In | general, of course, his approach is moral rather than scientific, but 223
for all that he is something of a sociologist too, most obviously when he identifies three of his imperfect polities in socio-economic terms and sees a development from the minimalist society to one of rentiers living off inherited wealth or conquerors taking it from them. He does not take it very far, clearly feeling more at home with explanations in terms of people's intentions, as when he credits the different manifestations of the domination society to the varying degrees with which the inhabitants desire power, or debits the habit of waking up sleeping men before robbing them to the gratification felt by the attacker in wielding his superior power. This takes him back into moral evaluation and makes him sound naive to us, but there seems to be a sociological insight of some kind again when he compares honour among equals to market transactions (*al-muʿāmalāt al-sūqiyya*), though it is hard to tell precisely what he had in mind.[123]

His immediate successors made nothing of these insights. Ibn Sīnā certainly had a sociologist in him too: it comes to the fore in his brief analysis of the social functions of religion, which is so striking in that the religion in question is his own. Al-Bīrūnī also had the ability to treat his own religion objectively. But he had no special interest in constitutions.[124] There is a development in a non-political vein of what could be al-Fārābī's *jāhilī* polities in al-Ghazzālī's *Mishkāt*, where they occupy the lowest rungs on the ladder of religious enlightenment. But the passage could also be an independent development of Aristotle's *NE*.[125] The lowest level is occupied by the slaves of pleasure (*ʿabīd al-ladhdha*), who are compared to animals (*bahāʾim*); they are followed by those who think that ultimate happiness lies in domination (*ghalaba*), such as the bedouin, Kurds and many stupid people, who are also compared to animals, now of the predatory type (*sibāʿ*); they are followed in their turn by those who think that ultimate happiness lies in the accumulation of wealth (*yasār*); and above them we have those who think that happiness lies in honour (*jāh*), fame and renown. The higher rungs all consist of people seeking knowledge of God, and al-Ghazzālī has his own (very interesting) classification for them; he did not use al-Fārābī's cities of error, deception, change, or the like, which do not

123 Al-Fārābī, *K. al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya*, ed. Najjār, p. 91 = Najjār, "Alfarabi, *The Political Regime*," p. 44.

124 Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 187 sq., 284 sq.

125 Al-Ghazzālī, *Mishkāt al-anwār*, ed. al-Laḥḥām, pp. 115 sqq. = Gairdner, *Al-Ghazzālī's Mishkāt al-anwār*, pp. 89 sq. (section III, on those veiled by pure darkness); cf. Aristotle, *NE* 1095b = *Akhlāq*, ed. Badawī, pp. 60 sq.

to my knowledge reappear in any later work at all. Al-Ghazzālī's approach is moral rather than social-scientific, of course, and there is no hint that one stage
224 develops into | another. But moral classifications have it in them to develop into evolutionary theories when somebody has the idea of setting them in motion, and if there are hints of sociology in al-Fārābī, Ibn Sinā and al-Bīrūnī, there is definitely one of *Religionswissenschaft* here.[126] But nothing came of it.

It was in the western Islamic world that the al-Fārābī's imperfect constitutions generated new ideas, in the work of Ibn Rushd and above all Ibn Khaldūn. The exact role played by al-Fārābī in the genesis of their ideas, as distinct from Plato and Aristotle (in the case of Ibn Rushd) and Ibn Rushd himself (in the case of Ibn Khaldūn), awaits examination. What is striking is the lack of continuity: al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Bīrūnī, al-Ghazzālī, Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khaldūn were all towering intellects; each one of them had something strikingly interesting to say on subjects to do with, or derived from, political thought; each one of them took a giant step in a new direction. But in between, the ideas went dormant or died. Medieval Muslim society did not have the resources to sustain inquiry into social-scientific questions on a regular basis, or even the desire or the need; the wealth of ideas developed in the tenth and eleventh centuries far exceeded what a society with so small a sector of educated laymen (as opposed to religious scholars) could handle, especially after the invasions from Central Asia had begun. It was al-Fārābī's virtuous ruler, the king in truth and perfect man, who found an enduring market, not the exasperating real world that he had tried to capture with his imperfect constitutions.

225 **Chart 1: Overview of the Imperfect Constitutions**

Al-Fārābī's works are listed in the order in which they are treated in the article. The constitutions are surveyed on the following model:

(Pagan polities)

1. rubric name and its opposite
2. imperfect aims
3. names of constitutions mentioned

126 Cf. H. Landolt (1991), "Ghazālī and 'Religionswissenschaft'. Some Notes on the *Mishkāt al-anwār*," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 45, pp. 19–72.

(Monotheist polities)

* 1. rubric name
* 2. imperfections in question
* 3. names of corresponding constitutions

(Individuals and groups without political organization)

i. rubric name
ii. imperfections in question
iii. names of corresponding individuals or groups

Fuṣūl, 1

1. minimalist vs. virtuous (*ḍarūriyya*, *fāḍila*)
2. necessities; the best of all things mistakenly held to be pleasure (*al-tamattuʿ bi'l-ladhdhāt*) or wealth (*yasār*), or the like
3. *al-madīna al-ḍarūriyya*

Fuṣūl, 2

1. —
2. high status, honour and power (*jalāla*, *karāma*, *ghalaba*); wealth (*yasār*); pleasure (*al-tamattuʿ bi'l-ladhdhāt*)
3. *khasāsat al-riyāsa*

Fuṣūl, 3

1. pagan vs. *virtuous* (*jāhiliyya*, *fāḍila*); corrupt (*fāsida*)
2. power (*taghallub*)
3. *siyāsat* or *siyar al-taghallub*, *al-siyāsa al-taghallubiyya*

* 1. corrupt (*fāsida*)?[127] 226

127 The expression *al-siyāsāt al-fāsida* occurs in a passage on tyrannical polities, which are explicitly identified as *jāhilī*, so at first sight it looks like another word for *jāhilī*, and it has been entered as such under rubric 1 here. But the change of terminology is quite striking. To al-Fārābī's Neoplatonist predecessors, "corrupt" meant "Christian," and it may be the Neoplatonist usage that is reflected here (above, n. 98). It may also be in the sense of "imperfect monotheist" that it is used in the *Ḥurūf* (cf. the article, n. 17, 102). But in the

* 2. —
* 3. [cities of?] sinners (*al-fussāq*)[128]

Iḥṣāʾ

1. pagan vs. virtuous (*jāhiliyya, fāḍila*)
2. wealth (*yasār*); honour (*karāma*); etc.
3. *riyāsat al-khissa, riyāsat al-karāma*

Milla

1. pagan vs. virtuous (*jāhiliyya, fāḍila*)
2. necessities (*al-khayr al-ḍarūrī*); wealth (*yasār*); pleasure (*ladhdha*); honour and high status (*karāma wa-jalāla*); power (*al-ghalaba*)
3. —

* 1. —
* 2. innocent adhesion to wrong beliefs; leader deceiving followers
* 3. *riyāsat al-ḍalāla*; *r. al-tamwīh*

Madīna fāḍila

1. pagan vs. virtuous (*jāhilīyya, fāḍila*)
2. necessities (*al-ḍarūrī*); wealth (*al-yasār wa'l-tharwa*); pleasure (*al-tamattuʿ bi'l-ladhdha*); honour (*karāma*); power (*taghallub*); freedom (*an yakūnū aḥrāran*)
3. the six corresponding constitutions (see chart 2)

* 1. —
* 2. right beliefs not matched in action; unperceived change of originally right beliefs and actions; leader deceiving followers
* 3. *m.fāsiqa*; *m. mubaddala*; *m. ḍālla*

227 i. *nawābit al-mudun*

MF, *fāsida* views are ancient fallacies that reappear among the inhabitants of *both jāhilī* and erring (*ḍālla*) cities (MF, 18, §1, cf. the discussion of the *nawābit* above), so it seems that al-Fārābī never settled for an overall term for imperfect polities of the monotheist type.

128 The sinners mentioned in §73/78 are clearly related to the inhabitants of the sinful (*fāsiqa*) city in MF 15, §19; 16, §8; but whether a sinful city is presupposed (or in the making) here is unclear.

ii. —
iii. —

Siyāsa madaniyya

1. pagan vs. virtuous (*jāhilīyya*, *fāḍila*)
2. necessities (*al-ḍarūrī*); wealth (*al-tharwa wa'l-yasār*); pleasure (*al-tamattuʿ bi'l-ladhdha*); honour (*an yukarramū*); power (*al-ghalaba*); [freedom][129]
3. the six corresponding constitutions (see chart 2)

* 1. —
* 2. beliefs not matched in action; belief system wrong in some way or other
* 3. *m. fāsiqa; m. ḍālla*

i. (a) *nawābit*; (b) *al-bahīmiyyūn*
ii. (a) use of religion to validate pagan aims; rejection of religion for philosophy; uncertainty about or outright rejection of the claims of both religion *and* philosophy
(b) no moral system at all
iii. (a) *mutaqanniṣūn*, *muḥarrifa*, *māriqa*; [*mutazayyifūn*]; [*mutaḥayyirūn*, *ḥisbāniyya*, *sūfisṭā'iyya*][130]
(*b*) —

Chart 2: The Names of the Pagan Constitutions 228

This chart shows the names used by al-Fārābī for the constitutions he inherited from antiquity. He implicitly gives more names than is listed here, for he often mentions erroneous aims without explicitly naming the corresponding constitution, and as he notes in the *Iḥṣā'*, pagan constitutions were (usually) called after their aims. This was not true of all of them, however, and the list here is restricted to regimes explicitly mentioned. (For the aims, see chart 1.) The constitutions are listed in alphabetical order and al-Fārābī's works are given in the order in which they are treated in the article. The abbreviations are *i.*: *ijtimāʿ*; *m.*: *madīna*; *r.*: *riyāsa*; *s.*: *siyāsa*; *sr.*: *siyar*.

129 The *SM* identifies it in terms of its characteristics (people are free) rather than its aims.
130 Al-Fārābī almost uses *tazyīf* as a technical term for the second subcategory; the names in the third are the standard appellations for the people it includes, but he does not use them.

	Democracy	Minimalist	Oligarchy (wealth)	Pleasure	Timocracy (honour)	Tyranny
***Fuṣūl*, 1**:		*m. ḍarūriyya*				
***Fuṣūl*, 2**:			*khasāsat al-r.*			
***Fuṣūl*, 3**:						*s. al-taghallub*
						sr. al-taghallub
						s. taghallubiyya
Iḥṣā':			*r. al-khissa*	*r. al-karāma*		
Milla:						
MF:	*m. al-jamā'iyya*	*m. ḍarūriyya*	*m. al-nadhāla*	*m. al-khissa wa'l-suqūṭ*	*m. al-karāma*	*m. al-taghallub*
SM:	*m. jamā'iyya*	*m. ḍarūriyya*	*m. al-nadhāla*	*m. al-khissa*	*m. karāmiyya*	*m. al-taghallub*
	i. al-ḥurriyya	*i. al-ḍarūrī*	*i. ahl al-nadhāla*	*i. khasīs*	*i. al-karāma*	*i. al-taghallub*
	m. al-aḥrār					*m. al-jabbārīn*

CHAPTER 13

Pre-Existence in Iran: Zoroastrians, Ex-Christian Mu'tazilites, and Jews on the Human Acquisition of Bodies*

1

How have human beings come to be in this world, encased in gross bodies that give them endless trouble, eventually killing them? This was a question of burning importance in late antiquity, when it was widely believed that humans had once been spiritual beings. That we have come into this material world from a higher, spiritual state was the view of Plato and the many who followed him, whether pagans, Jews or Christians, of all Gnostics whether they were indebted to Plato or not, and also of the Zoroastrians. All agreed that in one sense or other, humans were divine beings by origin. How then had their divinity come to be enveloped in flesh? The Gnostics said that malign forces had captured and immured them, or in other words, that humans were innocent victims of evil powers. The pagan, Jewish and Christian believers in pre-existence said that on the contrary, their souls had drifted into a material world of their own accord, attracted to matter, or that they had been placed in bodies by way of punishment for their sins, thus alleging that their predicament was of their own making. The Zoroastrians disagreed with all three answers.

The Zoroastrian answer is given in a myth known, according to Bailey, as the "Decision of the *Fravardīn*", which survives in several different versions: three are told in Pahlavi books, the *Bundahishn*,[1] the *Dādestān ī dēnīg*[2] (third/ninth century), and the *Pahlavi Rivāyat* (fourth/tenth century);[3] another version was

* I should like to thank Shaul Shaked and Michael Cook for reading and commenting on this paper. Where references are given in the form 324 = 336, the first figure refers to the text and the second to the translation.

1 *Greater Bundahishn* (hereafter *GrBd*), ch. 38:12 ff., in H.W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1971), 108 (hereafter ZP). Slightly different translations are found in R.C. Zaehner, *Zurvan: a Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford, 1955), 324–336, and W.W. Malandra, *The Fravaši Yašt: Introduction, Translation, Commentary* (University of Pennsylvania, PhD, 1971), 23–24.

2 *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (hereafter *Dd*), M. Jaafari-Dehaghi, ed. and tr. (Paris, 1998), question 36:25–28.

3 *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (hereafter *PRDd*), A.V. Williams, ed. and tr. (Copenhagen, 1990), ch. 17d:13–14 (94–95 = 35).

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recorded by the Muslim scholar Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (fl. later third/ninth century);[4] and there is also a fifth version in the Persian *Sad dar-i Bundahishn*, which dates from the fourteenth or fifteenth century, too late for it to be considered here.[5] As told in the *Bundahishn*, the myth says that God—Ohrmazd—consulted the *fravahrān*, the pre-existing spirits of mankind, about putting them into the material world. God lent them his omniscient wisdom and asked them whether they would prefer to stay as they were, immortal and free of ene-
2 mies, or to be dressed in bodies in | order to fight against the Demon in return for resurrection and immortality in material form. The *fravahrān* or, to use the English plural, the *fravahr*s foresaw that they would suffer much evil from the Demon in the material world, but even so, they chose to go and fight. Abū ʿĪsā adds that some of them were then captured by Iblīs. The Zoroastrian answer, in other words, is that we are in this world, encased in flesh, because we have agreed to come here to fight on God's behalf. We left our heavenly abode to go on a mission, and we knew in advance that it would be tough; some of us have fallen into enemy hands, but we have to persevere until the task is finished. The *Pahlavi Rivāyat* recounts the myth in the context of the dire state of Zoroastrian Iran, stressing that one must stay and do one's duty even though one may be persecuted for the performance of worship: one must fight when an enemy overruns the country, to leave is a mortal sin.[6] Not all versions of the myth give the *fravahr*s a choice: in the *Dādestān ī dēnīg* Ohrmazd simply determines that they shall wear flesh, and in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, they complain to him about the hardship ahead. But here too, he persuades them. In sum, they are neither victims nor sinners, but rather heroes.

In what follows I shall look at the place of this myth in Zoroastrianism and examine its interaction with similar myths current among Muʿtazilites from a Christian background and the Jews of Mesopotamia and Iran. To keep the discussion manageable, the Gnostics and the pagan Platonists will be left aside (except for Plato himself). The aim of the comparison is to illustrate the

4 Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, parts 1–3, W. Madelung, ed. (Tehran and Berlin, 2012), 651. It is also Abū ʿĪsā who is reflected (unnamed) in al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa'l-niḥal*, W. Cureton, ed. (London, 1842–1846), 183 = D. Gimaret and G. Monnot, trs, *Livre des religions et des sectes* (Unesco, 1986), i, 637.

5 It is translated in A. de Jong, 'The First Sin: Zoroastrian Ideas about the Time before Zarathustra', in S. Shaked, ed., *Genesis and Regeneration: Essays on Conceptions of Origins* (Jerusalem, 2005), 194–195.

6 *PRDd* 17d10. The world foreseen by the *fravahr*s in the *Sad dar-i Bundahishn* is also one in which Zoroastrians are derided, harassed and prevented from performing worship (de Jong, 'First Sin', 194).

degree to which the different religious communities on the Iranian side of the Euphrates took account of one another's positions and used the same material to express their disagreements.

The Place of the Myth in Zoroastrianism

The Pahlavi books of the ninth and tenth centuries postulate that the world was created twice: initially, Ohrmazd brought it into existence in an invisible, spiritual state called *mēnōg*, and 3000 years later he created it all over again in the visible, tangible, material world in which we find ourselves, the *gētīg*.[7] Our myth tells us about the transfer of mankind from the *mēnōg* to the *gētīg*. It does so by recourse to an Avestan concept. In Yasht 13, the *fravashi*s (Phl. *fravahr*s) are a vast army of warlike deities who form part of and maintain the natural world. Our myth envisages the human species as coming into the material world by these warlike deities assuming bodies of flesh in order to fight evil in the material arena.[8] It also develops an ancient theme. In Yasna 29, the soul of the ox asks for whom it has been created and complains of oppression. The lost Avestan *Varshtmānsr Nask* explained that the ox made this complaint in the *mēnōg* and that it asked not to be created in a body, or alternatively to be created insensitive to pain.[9] According to the *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, all the beneficent animals (*gōspandān*) objected to Ohrmazd's decision that they should give their bodies to the material world for mankind to eat them, and Fire did not want to go into a body either.[10] The *Dēnkard* says that the entire creation, including humans, asked not to be created in the material world.[11] Ohrmazd persuaded all of them to accept. What the myth of the *fravahr*s tells us is how human beings were made to agree. Ohrmazd lent them his omniscience, and this enabled them to see that going into the material world was for the best (also an old theme);[12] or

7 S. Shaked, 'The Notions of *mēnōg* and *gētīg* in the Pahlavi Texts and Their Relation to Eschatology', *Acta Orientalia*, 33 (1971), 59–107.

8 Cf. Malandra, *Fravaši Yašt*, 8, 23–24.

9 *Dēnkard* (hereafter *Dk*) IX, 29, in M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien* (Paris, 1963), 196–197 (nos 1–3).

10 *PRDd*, ch. 14; 18d3–22; 46, 30–34 (the last also in Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 362–367).

11 *Dk* IX, 29, in Molé, *Culte*, 196–197 (no. 4); cf. de Jong, 'First Sin', 194, where fire, cattle, and mankind all refuse to go into the material world.

12 Thus the *GrBd* (above, note 1). For the theme, cf. *Dk* VIII, 14; IX, 24, 17, in Molé, *Culte*, 277 (293 = 278 (no. 7), 294 (no. 17)), citing the *Spand Nask* and the *Varshtmānsr Nask* on Ohrmazd giving Zoroaster his wisdom of omniscience; *Dd* 36:30; *PRDd* 36:8–12; C.G. Cereti,

they were swayed by Ohrmazd's promise to create Zoroaster for them (another
3 old | theme),[13] and/or they liked the reward that Ohrmazd promised them, the future body and the renovation, or something unspecified. The suggestion that they could have been created insensitive to pain is forgotten. What is always clear is that they were not forced into this world, still less were they being *punished* by being sent into bodies. This is the point that the *Bundahishn* and Abū ʿĪsā's version emphasise by giving the *fravahr*s a choice: they could have opted for comfort, but they preferred to help in the battle against evil.

Though the myth is well rooted in the Zoroastrian tradition, it is not well integrated in the story of the creation as the Pahlavi books tell it. Only the *Dādestān* says where in the story the episode is set: it was after forming the material world and making the upper third part of heaven a fortress, the lower part an enclosure for demons, and the middle a battle field, that Ohrmazd determined that the *fravahrs* should wear flesh. But no version tells us what happened next. Were all the *fravahr*s transferred to the material world in one go? If so, were all later generations reincarnations? Or are the souls of future people still *fravahr*s in Ohrmazd's presence, going down one by one as the souls of the dead come up? Or are they being kept in a special storehouse awaiting birth as embodied human beings? The *Dādestān* says that when Ohrmazd decreed that the *fravahr*s should wear flesh, he arranged that they should come into the material word from time to time (*zamānag zamānag*) in their own nature (*gohrag*) clothed in the garment of flesh.[14] This is suggestive of reincarnation. But *zamānag zamānag* can also mean "in every age", so all the passage says is probably that no age should be without human beings.[15] The *Dādestān* also has a passage according to which Ohrmazd created a treasury containing the substances (*gohrān*), seeds (*tōhmagān*), natures (*chihrān*), powers (*zōrān*), and acts, tasks or functions (*kārān*) of people from Gayomard to the Sōshyans.[16]

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ed. and tr., *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn* (Rome, 1995), 3–4, where Ohrmazd's omniscience makes him realise that being mortal with children is better than being immortal without them.

13 It is rooted in Yasna 29 and appears in the *Varshtmānsr Nask*, where Zoroaster is created to persuade the ox (*Dk* IX, 29, 5 in Molé, *Culte*, 196–198 (no. 5)). It persuades mankind in the *PRDd* (above, note 3).

14 *Dd* 36:26.

15 *Dd* 36:14.

16 *Dd* 36:14, where *kārān* is translated as "skills" (that they could be understood as functions was suggested to me by Shaul Shaked). Compare *Dk* VIII, 5, 5, in Molé, *Culte*, 390, on the *Dāmdād Nask*: it spoke of the creation and classes of the creatures, "of their *sti* (being, essence), their *tōχmag* (seed), their *srātag* (kinds, or *sraχtag*, parts), their *čihr* (nature)

This sounds like a storehouse from which the bits and pieces of future human beings are drawn. It could have been combined with the idea of reincarnation by the storehouse being envisaged along the lines of a pigeon house from which the souls would fly out and back again until their release from this world. But if the *Dādestān* is alluding to such ideas, it must have copied the passages in question from a work representing non-official Zoroastrianism. The priests of Fārs did know of a heavenly treasury, but it was a storehouse of merits, not of souls,[17] and they certainly did not believe in reincarnation.

The myth also stands apart from both the Avesta and the Pahlavi books in its use of the word *fravahr*, for humans are not normally envisaged as *fravahr*s dressed in bodies there. The term is first attested in its Avestan form in Yasht 13, in which its exact nature is hard to define. The warlike deities called *fravashi*s include the spirits of past, present and future human beings, apparently always righteous;[18] but all living beings from plants and animals to the gods, including Ahura Mazda, have *fravashi*s, and so do inanimate things such as the sky, the earth, and the waters.[19] Whatever exactly the *fravashi* may be in this Yasht, however, the *fravashi* is not identified with the immortal part that humans carry with them into the material world in the rest of the Avesta. It is the soul (*urvan*) which is judged, and to which funeral ceremonies refer, as Malandra notes.[20]

The ninth-century compilers, on the other hand, have two quite different conceptions of the *fravahr*. In the *Bundahishn*, it is that bit of the human being which stays behind in Ohrmazd's presence. The soul that people have in their body down here is the *ruvān* (the Pahlavi form of *urvan*). When they die, their *ruvān* will join their *fravahr*,[21] or differently put, they will become 4

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and their *kār* (action, task)"; cf. the renditions in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, E. Yarshater, ed. (New York, 1982) (hereafter *EIr.*), s.v. 'Dāmdād Nask' (MacKenzie).

17 Cf. C. Pavry, *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of a Future Life* (New York, 1926), 74–100, *EIr.*, s.v. 'Eschatology, i' (Shaked).

18 For the inclusion of the future Saoshyants, righteous teachers, and future humanity in general, see Yasht (hereafter Yt) 13:17, 21, 74, 145, 150, 154; similarly Yasna (hereafter Y.) 26:6; *Visparad*, 11:7. On their righteousness, cf. Malandra, *Fravaši Yašt*, 44–45. In general, see *EIr.*, s.v. 'Fravaši' (Boyce), J. Kellens, 'Les Fravaši', in *Anges et démons. Actes du colloque de Liège et Louvain la Neuve, 5–26 Novembre 1987* (*Homo Religiosus* 14) (Louvain la Neuve, 1989), 99–114; P. Gignoux, *Man and Cosmos in Ancient Iran* (Rome, 2001), 16 ff.

19 Yt 13:74, 79–86.

20 Malandra, *Fravaši Yašt*, 37.

21 *GrBd* 3, 11 (in Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 323–334; Bailey, *ZP*, 112). In animals, the *fravahr* is replaced by a *mēnōg*.

*fravahr*s, blessed dead, or so at least if they have been righteous.[22] Yasna 16:7 and other passages duly identify the souls of the departed and the *fravashi*s of the righteous;[23] but before death, the *fravahr* is a component outside the human being. The *Bundahishn* seems to envisage the *fravahr* as a heavenly alter ego, the Zoroastrian equivalent of the Manichaean Twin:[24] it existed before an individual was born and would live on after his death, and in between it acted as his guardian angel (though this last point has been disputed).[25] It is the one component out of five which distinguishes humans from animals here (though animals do have *fravashi*s in Yasht 13).[26]

According to the other ninth-century compilers, the *fravahr* was indeed to be found in the human body, along with the *ruvān*; but as these compilers saw it, the *fravahr* was not the bearer of a person's identity, merely a biological function. Zādspram defines it as the agent which watches over the body and causes growth and increase, deriving the term from *fra-vaχsh*, "to grow forth".[27] The *Dēnkard* finds the etymology of *fravahr* in *parvartār*, "nourisher", rather than *vaχshēnīdan*, and explains the *fravahr* as the maintainer and nourisher of the body:[28] it is controlled by the *ruvān*, and whereas the *ruvān* has will and acts voluntarily, the *fravahr* is natural and acts according to its (inbuilt) nature.[29] In the same vein, the *Dādestān* lists "the preserving *fravahr*" as one out of many faculties possessed by humans in the material world.[30] All three seem to envisage the *fravahr* along the lines of the vegetative soul of Aristotelianism, presumably with reference to the fact that the *fravashi*s are associated with the growth of plants, the nourishment of animals and the protection of

22 Cf. *EIr*., s.v. 'Fravaši' (Boyce).

23 Quoted in J.H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* (London, 1913), 261–262.

24 Cf. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, lecture 8, reaching a similar conclusion. Malanda objects (*Fravaši Yašt*, 47–48), but the concept of such a double is also found in Manichaeism and other early Christian/Gnostic texts.

25 Kellens, 'Les Fravaši', 106.

26 Cf. the references given above, note 21; Yt 13:74 (where their *fravashi*s are seemingly identified with their souls); Bailey, *ZP*, 111.

27 Zādspram, *Anthologie*, P. Gignoux and A. Tafazzoli, ed. and tr. (Paris, 1993), 30:35, cf. also 29:2; 30:22; Bailey, *ZP*, 107–108; Gignoux, *Man and Cosmos*, 17–18.

28 Cf. Bailey, *ZP*, 100–101.

29 J. de Menasce, tr., *Le troisième livre du Dēnkart* (Paris, 1973), no. 123 (*DkB* 92.3; *DkM* 119); Bailey, *ZP*, 98 ff., citing *DkM* 241.13 ff.; cf. M. Shaki, 'A Few Philosophical and Cosmogonical Chapters of the Dēnkart', *Archiv Orientální*, 41 (1973), 150; S. Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation: Varieties of Religion in Sasanian Iran* (London, 1994), appendix E.

30 *Dd* 2:13.

the developing fetus in Yasht 13. In short, none of the Pahlavi compilers shares the concept of the *fravahr* that we find in our myth. The myth must be rooted in a different tradition.

There is another reflection of the tradition in question in the Pahlavi books, however. According to the *Dēnkard*, three components were required to create Zoroaster in the material world: his *fravahr*, his *χwarra* (glory), and his *tan gōhr* (body substance). All three were sent down from on high.[31] This account is based on the *Spand Nask*, a lost portion of the Avesta, but in the *Spand Nask* itself, according to the *Dēnkard*'s summary of it, only two components were involved: his *fravahr* and his *χwarra*. There is no mention of the body substance.[32] The same is true of Zādspram's brief account.[33] Al-Shahrastānī has another version, presumably from Abū ʿĪsā, in which the two components are | 5
Zoroaster's *fravahr* (*rūḥ*) and his body substance (*shabaḥ*): here it is his glory which is missing.[34] All versions give Zoroaster a *fravahr*, however. No version gives him a *ruvān*.[35]

In sum, the myth of the *fravahr*s develops a well-known Avestic theme, reluctance and eventual agreement to enter the material world, and shares with the story of Zoroaster's creation the concept of humans as consisting of body and *fravahr*, or "spirit", as the Muslims translated it, rather than of body and soul (*ruvān*). The priestly compilers of the Pahlavi books seem to have plucked the myth of the *fravahr*s from the tradition in which it was at home and inserted it without further ado in their own. They clearly liked it: no less than five versions of it survive. But they do not seem to have cared for the tradition in which they found it.

Where did they find it, then? Malandra wonders whether the account of Zoroaster's creation was heterodox, on the grounds that it postulates a link between *fravahr* and *hōm* which is not otherwise attested.[36] He may well be right that it reflects speculation about the esoteric meaning of the ritual,

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31 *Dk* VII, 2, in M. Molé, ed. and tr., *La légende de Zoroastre selon les texts pehlevis* (Paris, 1967), 14 ff.; id., *Culte*, 284 ff.; cf. W.R. Darrow, 'Zoroaster Amalgamated: Notes on Iranian Prophetology', *History of Religions*, 27 (1987), 109–132.

32 *Spand Nask*, in *Dk* VIII, 14, in Molé, *Culte*, 276–277 (no. 1).

33 Zādspram, 5–6 (first half also in Bailey, *ZP*, 32; Molé, *Culte*, 284).

34 Shahrastānī, 186 = i, 643. The *rūḥ* is placed in a tree, the *shabaḥ* (wrongly *rūḥ* again in some MSS, preferred by Gimaret and Gignoux) goes into the milk: this identifies them as the *fravahr* and *tan gōhr* respectively (similarly Darrow, 'Zoroaster Amalgamated', 131).

35 Boyce copes with this rather striking fact by simply declaring *ruvān* to be what is meant by *fravahr* here (*EIr*., s.v. 'Fravaši').

36 Malandra, *Fravaši Yašt*, 53.

but it does not make much sense to call it heterodox. For one thing, there was no single authority representing orthodoxy until the Sasanian period. Until then, there must have been a huge diversity of Zoroastrian doctrine, as in fact there continued to be thereafter too: even on so fundamental a question as how a good and an evil realm had come to coexist the Muslim heresiographers recorded no less than eight different answers (one of them the canonical doctrine found in the Pahlavi books).[37] We do not know how much of this diversity the priests from Fārs declared to be heterodox, but they can hardly have proscribed everything not attested in the exiguous corpus which survives: it does not even preserve all of the Avesta. For another thing, it is in that very corpus that we find the myth of Zoroaster's creation, narrated as a fundamental part of the faith complete with the link between *fravahr* and *hōm*: if the Sasanian priests did not deem it heterodox, what sense does it make for a modern scholar to do so? The priests may well have questioned the orthodoxy of other aspects of the tradition from which they picked the myth, but it evidently is not going to be in their own accounts of true Zoroastrianism that we are going to find the aspects in question.[38]

The tradition reflected in the myths of the *fravahr*s and Zoroaster's creation was probably a regional form of Zoroastrianism different from that of Fārs, which the Sasanians made hegemonic. More precisely, it was probably Zoroastrianism as carried by the priests of Mesopotamia and western Iran, for it is in that region that the myth remained current. According to a Gūrānī text preserved by the Ahl-i Ḥaqq, God was originally alone, but desired to be known, so he created a pearl which floated in the primordial waters in the invisible world, and thereafter he called forth seven companions from his own essence, all made in his image. They worshipped him day and night, imploring him to appear before their eyes and reveal the secret of what the pearl contained. He agreed on the condition that they would accept incarnation in the material world: they would have to put on 1001 garments, meaning that they would be reincarnated 1001 times; in every incarnation they would have to pass all kinds of tests, and for every sin they committed there would be additional "garments" to go through by way of punishment, in human or animal form. Those who suc-

37 S. Shaked, 'The Myth of Zurvan: Cosmogony and Eschatology', in I. Gruenwald, S. Shaked, and G.G. Stroumsa, eds, *Messiah and Christos: Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity presented to David Flusser* (Tübingen, 1992), 234; cf. id., *Dualism in Transformation*, 70, stressing the diversity of doctrine characteristic of Sasanian religion.

38 Malandra's analogy with apocryphal gospels such as that of Thomas is faulty given that these gospels were rejected by the upholders of orthodoxy (cf. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vol. III, 3.25.7, condemning several of them, including that of Thomas, as heretical).

ceeded would be united with God on the last day. The companions made a pact with God, accepting these conditions, and the divine essence appeared inside the pearl.[39]

Here as in the myth of the *fravahr*s, humans are divine beings who go 6
into the material world in agreement with God, fully aware of the hardship that it is likely to entail. There are only seven of them now, identified as God's companions, suggesting that the *fravahr*s have merged with the seven *amahraspand*s, but they still go into the world in the hope of obtaining a divine reward when the mission has been accomplished. The nature of the mission is no longer clear, and humans are not exactly heroes. The Zoroastrian idea of voluntary embodiment has also been combined with the Platonic/Christian idea of embodiment as punishment: for every sin committed, there would be an additional life on earth. But even without punishment, material existence is equated with reincarnation. This is in line with expectation, for when the Zoroastrians of north-western Iran became Muslims (of sorts), they often proved to be believers in reincarnation.[40] Late though the narrative is, what we see here is clearly a version of the "Decision of the *Fravahr*s".

Mu'tazilites and Christians

Several other myths about pre-existence were current in the third/ninth century in which the Zoroastrian myth was first recorded, four of them among the Mu'tazilites in Baghdad. The best known is that formulated by Aḥmad b. Khābiṭ (or Ḥā'iṭ or the like), a Mu'tazilite Sufi and pupil of al-Naẓẓām (d. 220/835 or later).[41] We may now briefly survey their versions.

(a) *Ibn Khābiṭ*

According to Ibn Khābiṭ, God created companions for himself in a world other than this one and gave them sound natures, intelligence, and knowledge of himself, perfecting their minds. He bestowed his favours on them, and also

39 M. Mokri, 'Le Kalâm gourani sur le pacte des Compagnons Fidèles de Vérité au sein de la Perle Prémondiale', *Journal Asiatique*, 265 (1977), 240–241.

40 Cf. P. Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge, 2012), chs 12, 14, 15; more briefly also ead., 'Ḵorramis', in *EIr* [Ed.: included as article 3, 'Khurramīs', in the present volume].

41 On Ibn Khābiṭ, see J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft* (Berlin, 1991–1997) (hereafter TG), iii, 430 ff., superseding C. Pellat, 'Deux curieux mu'tazilites: Aḥmad b. Ḥābiṭ et Faḍl al-Ḥadaṯī', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 50 (1984), 483–494.

imposed the duty of gratitude on them. Some of them obeyed him in everything he commanded: they stayed in the abode of bliss. Others disobeyed him in everything: they were expelled to the abode of everlasting punishment. Those in between were expelled to this world and dressed in bodies to be tested with pleasure, pain, misery and hardship as humans, birds, grass-eating beasts, predators, insects and other things in accordance with their sins in the first abode. Deep down, all living beings were a single species, for what defined them was the spirit, not the body, which was merely a mould (*qālab*) for the spirit, and legal obligation (*taklīf*) applied to animals too. All living beings would remain in this world as long as their acts of obedience were mixed with disobedience, coming back repeatedly in new moulds and forms. Those whose acts had become pure obedience would return to the abode of bliss in which they had been created, while those whose acts had become pure disobedience would be moved to the abode of everlasting fire. This happened when a certain measure of good or evil had been reached: once that measure was filled, all previous actions performed by that person turned into pure good or pure evil.[42]

At first sight, this sounds like another version of the myth of the *fravahr*s, but in fact it is Christian, more precisely Origenist, as has been noted before.[43] It depicts embodiment as a consequence of sin and explains the different statuses of angels, humans and demons with reference to a fall; and the fact that it ascribes a divine origin even to demons rules out a Zoroastrian origin. Origen (d. 254) explained the different statuses of living beings, including demons, with reference to a fall. In the simplified terms in which he was often understood by later readers, he said, in his *On First Principles* (*Peri Achōn*), that God originally created minds or intellects (*noes*) which formed a unity
7 with him, in | blessed contemplation. Through satiety or perversity, led by the future devil, they neglected God and turned into souls, which fell into the material world. Some minds fell only a little: they were the angels. Others fell completely: they were the demons. In between there were humans, whose different states reflected their prior sins. All were placed in bodies of various kinds in accordance with the gravity of their fall. The one *nous* that did not fall was Christ. His devotion was such that he became inseparably united

42 Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayna 'l-firaq*, M. Badr, ed. (Cairo, 1910), 256–259 = TG vi, 211f.; Shahrastānī, 42ff. = i, 223ff.; cf. also Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Faṣl fī 'l-milal wa'l-ahwā' wa'l-niḥal* (Cairo, 1317–1321), i, 90.

43 Thus, H.S. Nyberg, *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabī* (Leiden, 1919), 52, and at greater length, M.S. Seale, *Muslim Theology* (London, 1964), 74ff.; D. Thomas, *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam* (Cambridge, 1992), 5ff.

with God, and he took on a body voluntarily to help the souls find their way back. Eventually all would be restored to their spiritual existence. Even hell would disappear, the end would be like the beginning.[44] Origen's doctrine of pre-existence was designed to justify the diverse states of living beings: contrary to what the Marcionites and Gnostics claimed, God's seemingly unfair distribution of his favours was perfectly just, for all states reflected the exercise of free will by the minds in pre-existence.

Ibn Khābiṭ's myth, too, was meant to vindicate God's justice,[45] and that its roots lie in Origen's is corroborated by his Christology. Most strikingly, he said that before his incarnation, Christ had been an *ʿaql*, a mind or intellect (*nous*),[46] and that Christ had been created first, as shown by the *ḥadīth* in which the first thing that God creates is the *ʿaql*.[47] Origen similarly identified Christ as "the firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1:15) and as the wisdom that God created in the beginning (Prov. 8:22) (at the same time he held that the creation had existed as long as God himself, that the son had always been, and that all such statements were ultimately misleading because God was above temporal relations).[48] Like Origen, Ibn Khābiṭ saw Christ as both a created being and the pre-eternal *logos* (*kalima*),[49] the second God:[50] he held Christ to be the son of God "by adoption", as al-Baghdādī says,[51] presumably meaning that

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44 Origen, *On First Principles*, G.W. Butterworth, tr. (New York, 1966), esp. I, 8 (where the key passages are drawn from later authors); cf. the introduction for the problems connected with this work, extant only in a Latin translation and Koetschau's edition, inserting paraphrases and quotations found in other authors. For fuller and more nuanced accounts of Origen's views based on all his extant works, see P. Tzamalikos, *Origen: Cosmology and Ontology of Time* (Leiden, 2006); J.A. McGuckin, ed., *The SCM Press A–Z of Origen* (London and Louisville, 2006), s.vv. 'Apokatastasis', 'Fall', 'Pre-existence'.

45 Ibn Ḥazm, iv, 14.

46 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 260f. = *TG* vi, 218 (no. 27, i, translating *ʿaql* as *Logoswesen*). Shahrastānī, 44 = i, 225–226n, puts a Neoplatonist spin on it: Ibn Khābiṭ supposedly identified the first intellect with the active intellect from whom the different forms emanate.

47 Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* (Istanbul, 1928), 72.4; cf. id., *Farq*, 260f. =*TG* vi, 218 (no. 27, h), where the *ḥadīth* is cited in a form starting *inna Allāh khalaqa al-ʿaql*; it is cited in its normal form in Shahrastānī, 44 = i, 226 (*awwalu mā khalaqa Allāh al-ʿaql*); cf. I. Goldziher, 'Neuplatonische und gnostische Elemente im Ḥadīṭ', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 22 (1908) (repr. in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, J. Desomogyi, ed., v (Hildesheim, 1970)), 319.

48 Origen, *First Principles*, I, 4–5; IV, 4, 1; cf., Tzamalikos, *Origen*, 25.

49 Ibn Ḥazm, iv, 197.–3 = *TG* vi, 218f. (no. 29, a), with reference to both Ibn Khābiṭ and Faḍl al-Ḥadathī; Shahrastānī, 42 = i, 222, with reference to Ibn Khābiṭ alone.

50 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 217.1; cf. also Shahrastānī, 42 = i, 221.

51 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 260 (*ʿalā maʿnā ʾl-tabannī dūna ʾl-wilāda*) = *TG* vi, 217 (no. 27, b).

he saw Christ as having fused with the *logos* by mystical devotion.[52] Unlike Origen, however, he operated with not just two creations, one spiritual and one material, but also two creators, one pre-eternal and the other created in time, God and Christ: it was the latter who had created Adam in his image, he said, and God had delegated the running of this world to him.[53] (He is also reported to have held that God created all created beings at one and the same time, but perhaps he said this with the spiritual creation in mind, or perhaps he shared Origen's view that ultimately all chronological statements connected with God were misleading.)[54] Ibn Khābiṭ's distinction between two creators suggests that the Origenist myth had reached him via Evagrius (d. 399), a believer in Origenist pre-existence who played a major role in the formation of eastern Christian spirituality and whose *Kephalaia Gnostica* continued to be
8 read in its unexpurgated form in Syriac even after Justinian's | condemnation of Origenist views.[55] Evagrius assigned the spiritual creation to God while holding that Christ had created the material world. Admittedly, he also has passages presenting God as the creator of both, and it is arguable that he adhered to the standard Christian doctrine that God created the material world using Christ, the *logos*, as his instrument.[56] But if so, he lent himself to a more radical reading by the many who regarded God as so utterly unlike our finite, material world, that an intermediary principle was needed for any kind of relationship between the two to be possible; for it was the doctrine of Christ as the creator of the material world that Justinian condemned in 553.[57] In line with his belief in an

52 Cf. F. Refoulé, 'La christologie d'Évagre et l'origénisme', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 27 (1961), 263. The position is identified as Arian by Nyberg, *Kleinere Schriften*, 52n, a view shared by many enemies of Origen and Evagrius, cf. Refoulé, 'Christologie d'Évagre', 226 (cf. also 249, 262, on adoptianism); A Guillaumont, *Un philosophe au désert: Évagre le Pontique* (Paris, 2004), 86.

53 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 260 = TG vi, 217 (no. 27, a); id., *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 72; Ibn Ḥazm, iv, 197.–4 = TG vi, 218 (no. 29, a).

54 Ibn Ḥazm, iv, 198.6; Shahrastānī, 43 = i, 224. He owed this doctrine to his teacher, cf. Shahrastānī, 39 = i, 207.

55 Guillaumont, *Un philosophe au désert*, 102 ff.; cf also J. Konstantinovsky, *Evagrius Ponticus: the Making of a Gnostic* (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT, 2009), 23 f.

56 Konstantinovsky, *Evagrius*, 109, 122; cf. Guillaumont, *Un philosophe au désert*, 345–346 and 346n, only reporting the orthodox position; B. Daley, 'Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium', *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 27 (1976), 337, taking Evagrius to present Christ as the demiurge.

57 Konstantinovsky, *Evagrius*, 20–21 (no. 6 of the 15 anti-Origenist anathemas issued by the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553); slightly differently translated in Origen, *First Principles*, II, 8, 6a (p. 126).

utterly transcendent God, Ibn Khābiṭ also held that it was Christ, not God, who would sit in judgement in the hereafter, and that only Christ would be visible to mankind.[58]

Ibn Khābiṭ's myth also departs from Origen's myths in some respects, however. First and most obviously, Origen's minds fall away from God through neglect, but Ibn Khābiṭ's spirits fail to display gratitude to the benefactor, an obligation which the Mu'tazilites held to be clear on rational grounds, independently of the revelation of the law.[59] Since God had perfected the minds of his companions, according to Ibn Khābiṭ, they had no excuse for failing to be grateful (since he had also given them sound natures, it is not easy to see how they could be guilty of moral deficiency either, but one way or the other this problem recurs in all accounts trying to absolve God of responsibility for evil while at the same time making him the direct or indirect creator of everything without exception). We are not told how the spirits had displayed their ingratitude. Origen and his followers linked their doctrine of pre-existence with the Biblical account of the fall (as did Philo before them): the tunics of skin which God gave to Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21) represented the gross bodies in which they henceforth had to live, they said, though Origen was not sure about this reading.[60] But Ibn Khābiṭ is more likely to have adduced the Qur'ānic account of the primordial covenant between God and future mankind, still seeds in Adam's loins: "Am I not your lord?", God asked them; "yes", they replied (Q. 7:172).[61] Those who gave the right answer will have been the future angels, those who denied it outright the future demons, and the rest, the future mankind.

Secondly, Origen's myth has even the angels fall just a little: he envisages the starting point as something approaching complete unity with God. But in

58 Ibn al-Rāwandī in Khayyāṭ, *Kitāb al-intiṣār*, A.N. Nader, ed. and tr. (Beirut, 1957), 107.8 = 134–135; Baghdādī, *Farq*, 260 = *TG* vi, 217 (no. 27, c); id., *Uṣūl*, 72; cf. Konstantinovsky, *Evagrius*, 155 f. Here, too, Shahrastānī, 42 = i, 221, puts a Neoplatonist spin on it: Christ would appear on the day of judgement and remove the veils between himself and the forms which have emanated from him.

59 Cf. A.K. Reinhart, *Before Revelation* (Albany, 1995), ch. 6.

60 Philo, *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim*, I, 53; R.A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria* (Urbana, 2004), 105. For Origen and Gnostics who read the verse the same way, see the references in H. Chadwick, tr., *Origen contra Celsum* (Cambridge, 1953), 216n, *ad* IV, 40 (where Origen mentions the "secret and mysterious meaning" of the skins). His uncertainty is restated as outright rejection of the reading in Tzamalikos, *Origen*, 81.

61 For the same conjecture, see Van Ess, *TG*, iii, 432; similarly Mokri, 'Kalâm gourani sur le pacte', 243–244, with reference to the version of the Ahl-i Ḥaqq.

the account of Ibn Khābiṭ (as also in Philo),[62] it is the angels who represent the starting point: they stay in the place from which the others fall. Thirdly, Ibn Khābiṭ saw embodiment as not just punishment, but also a test, another Qurʾānic feature (e.g. Q. 21:35; 76:2), and one which recurs in the version told by the Ahl-i Ḥaqq. Finally, Origin and Evagrius held that hell would eventually disappear, all would be saved, even the devil, and the initial state would be restored (though Origen also voiced different views).[63] But Ibn Khābiṭ's hellfire is everlasting, once more in agreement with the Qurʾān.

9 Ibn Khābiṭ provides us with indirect testimony for Origenist beliefs among the Christians who were the main rivals of the Zoroastrians before the coming of Islam. But one can also tell that he or his ancestors had lived in a Zoroastrian environment: it shows in the striking metaphor he uses for Christ's incarnation. He does not say that Christ "dressed himself in a body", which was the standard expression in Eastern Syriac literature,[64] but rather that he *tadarraʿa jasadan* (or *biʾl-jasad*), put on a body as his coat of mail.[65] This is the Zoroastrian idea of the body as the armour that one needs to put on in order to enter the battle scene which is the material world, his "weapon and garment" or "weapon and instrument", as the *Dēnkard* describes it.[66] Ibn Khābiṭ's choice of this metaphor is unlikely to be accidental. What he is implying is that *Christ* put on a body as armour, *he* went into the world voluntarily, to save us; but *we* are not here of our own accord, our bodies are not an instrument of salvation, but rather a punishment for our sins. As one would expect, Ibn Khābiṭ was an ascetic. He and his associate, Faḍl al-Ḥadathī, found fault with Muḥammad for having married.[67]

It is also striking that Ibn Khābiṭ thinks in terms of spirit and body, not mind, soul and body, as did Origen and Evagrius. He may have been indebted to his teacher al-Naẓẓām here, for the latter likewise thought of man as a spirit (*rūḥ*) in a mould (*qālab*), and he too saw the body as an affliction and a

62 Cf. Philo, *de Somniis*, I, 138–140.

63 Cf. McGuckin, *Origen*, s.v. 'Apokatastasis' (Norris), Konstantinovsky, *Evagrius*, 170 ff.

64 Cf. S.P. Brock, 'Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition', in M. Schmidt, ed., *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Regensburg, 1982), 11–40; O. Shchuryk, *'Lᵉbeš pagrā'* as the Language of "Incarnation" in the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat the Persian Sage', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 83 (2007), 419–444.

65 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 261 (wrongly *tadharraʾa*) = *TG* vi, 218 (no. 27, i); Shahrastānī, 42 = i, 222.

66 R.C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London, 1961), 274, citing *DkM*, 383–384.

67 Ibn Ḥazm, i, 78.–8 (Ibn Khābiṭ only); iv, 197.–2 (both) = *TG* vi, 219 (no. 29, b).

prison.[68] The Zoroastrians of western Iran (inclusive of Mesopotamia) who had become Muslims of sorts likewise envisaged humans as spirits in moulds,[69] so the conception would appear to have been commonplace in that region. This reinforces the suspicion that the myth of the *fravahr*s was familiar to the priests of Fārs from the Zoroastrians of Mesopotamia and western Iran.

Further, Ibn Khābiṭ combines the idea of pre-existence with reincarnation. The two ideas are often linked. Origen was accused of believing in both, but this is most unlikely, not least because he repeatedly declares belief in reincarnation to be contrary to Biblical doctrine.[70] Evagrius did not postulate reincarnation either. As noted, however, the doctrine was common among former Zoroastrians in western Iran, where it survives to this day among the Ahl-i Ḥaqq and others.[71] It was also upheld by the Manichaeans for those too burdened by sin to obtain release.[72] Ibn Khābiṭ's belief in reincarnation is thus most likely to be a third reflection of the Iranian environment in which his ancestors lived.

There is a fourth reflection of this environment too. As Ibn Khābiṭ saw it, all living beings were members of a single species: the spirit in them was the same. It followed that all livings were endowed with reason (*nāṭiqa*), even animals. Indeed, Ibn Khābiṭ held even inanimate matter to be endowed with reason. He and others would follow the literal meaning of the Qur'ānic verses in which heaven, the earth, mountains, stones, birds and other animals are presented as speaking like human beings, and claim that even stones can think and reason (*ta'qilu wa-tanṭiqu*).[73] How stones had acquired their minds we are not told, but one assumes the answer is by spirits sinking to an inanimate state. At all events, this kind of panpsychism was also common in Iran. That everything is alive, sentient and intelligent is best known as a Manichaean view. However, it is also attested for the ex-Zoroastrian | Khurramīs and the Jahmiyya;[74] and 10

68 Ash'arī, *Kitāb maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, H. Ritter, ed. (Istanbul, 1929–1933), 331; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa'l-'adl*, xi, M.'A. al-Najjār and 'A-Ḥ. al-Najjār, eds (Cairo, 1965), 310.7; cf. *TG* vi, 113, with further attestations.

69 Cf. Crone, *Nativist Prophets*, ch. 12.

70 Cf. the summary in McGuckin, *Origen*, s.v. 'Transmigration of souls' (Roukema).

71 Cf. Crone, *Nativist Prophets*, chs 12, 14, 15, 19. The affinity with Khurramīs and other Ghulāt is also noted in Van Ess, *TG*, 434n.

72 Cf. G. Casadio, 'The Manichaean Metempsychosis: Typology and Historical Roots', in G. Wiesner and H-J. Klimkeit, eds, *Studia Manichaica* (Wiesbaden, 1992), 105–130.

73 Jāḥiẓ, *K. al-ḥayawān*, 'A-S.M. Hārūn, ed. (Cairo, 1938–1958), iv, 287.

74 Cf. P. Crone, 'Al-Jāḥiẓ on *aṣḥāb al-jahālāt* and the Jahmiyya', in R. Hansberger, M. Afifi al-Akiti, and C. Burnett, eds, *Medieval Arabic Thought: Essays in Honour of Fritz Zimmermann* (London and Turin, 2012) [Ed.: included as article 8 in the present volume], 27–40.

as we have seen, all living beings, from plants and animals to Ahura Mazda, as well as inanimate things such as the sky, the earth, and the waters are endowed with *fravashi*s in Yasht 13.

The fact that all living beings were endowed with the same spirit had another consequence to Ibn Khābiṭ, namely that animals were bound by the law. It was to the spirit that commands and prohibitions were addressed, he explained.[75] Animals are also moral agents in Zoroastrianism,[76] but Ibn Khābiṭ developed the idea in a manner unique to himself: he inferred that all animals must have had prophets to bring laws to them. Like human beings, animals formed nations to whom messengers were sent, drawn from their own species, addressing them in their own language: this was true of all of them, worms, fleas, lice, ants, bees, fish, pigs, monkeys, elephants and others included. Needless to say, he found support for this, as for all his doctrines, in the Qurʾān.[77]

All in all, Ibn Khābiṭ gives us a good idea of what Ibn Ḥanbal or a later scholar identified with him meant by *zanādiqa al-naṣārā*, loosely translatable as Christians of an Iranianised kind.[78] There were others like him. The Marcionites of Iran were so Iranianised (mostly along Manichaean lines) that one can barely recognize them as Christians.[79] In contrast, the Christian origin of Ibn Khābiṭ's beliefs comes through loud and clear even though he was a Muslim. But the Iranian input is no less evident, in his panpsychism, his view of animals, his belief in reincarnation, and in his use of a Zoroastrian metaphor to reject a Zoroastrian claim about the nature of human life.

(b) *Ibn Mānūsh and Others*

Ibn Khābiṭ had a colleague or pupil called Ahmad b. Ayyūb b. Mānūsh (or Bānūsh or the like),[80] who had a different version of the myth of pre-existence.[81]

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75 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 256 = *TG* vi, 211 (no. 19, c–f).

76 S. Shaked, 'The Moral Responsibility of Animals. Some Zoroastrian and Jewish Views on the Relation of Humans and Animals', in M. Stausberg, ed., *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte* (*Festschrift für Anders Hultgård*) (Berlin and New York, 2001), 578–595.

77 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 257.15 = *TG* vi, 212 (no. 19, m); Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-badʾ waʾl-taʿrīkh*, C. Huart, ed. and tr. (Paris, 1899–1919), iii, 8–9; Ibn Ḥazm, i, 78 f.; iv, 198.2–5; Shahrastānī, 44 = i, 227; cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iv, 79–80.

78 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Radd ʿalā ʾl-zanādiqa waʾl-Jahmiyya* (Cairo, 1393), 19.

79 Cf. M. Frenschkowski, 'Marcion in arabischen Quellen', in G. May and K. Greschat, eds, *Marcion und seine kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung* (Berlin, 2002), 39–63.

80 They were both pupils of al-Naẓẓām according to Shahrastānī, 43 = i, 224. Ibn Mānūsh was a pupil of Ibn Khābiṭ according to Baghdādī, *Farq*, 255.11; Ibn Ḥazm, i, 90–10; iv, 198.17. See further Van Ess, *TG*, iii, 441 f.

81 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 258 f. = *TG* vi, 220. Baghdādī had heard it from one of Ibn Mānūsh's pupils.

According to him, God started by creating *al-ajzā' al-muqaddara*, the predetermined number of particles (or alternatively the particles endowed with *qadar*, free will).[82] Each one of them was an atom and all were alive, intelligent (*ʿāqila*) and completely identical. God then gave them a choice: did they want to be tested on the earth or not? Some chose to be tested, others declined and stayed where they were. Of those who opted for the test (*miḥna*, *imtiḥān*), some turned disobedient and sank to a lower level, others obeyed and were raised to a higher level: thereafter they (i.e. those who disobeyed him) repeatedly came back in different moulds and forms until some became human beings and others animals of different kinds in accordance with their sins. All we are told about the humans is that they could commit acts of obedience entitling them to status as prophet or angel, presumably meaning in this life (according to Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Mānūsh claimed to be a prophet himself).[83] Whether they continued to be reincarnated if they were sinners is not stated. Reincarnation certainly continued for the animals, but always as animals, not as humans, and they were not *mukallaf*: it was simply by way of punishment for their sins that they would come back repeatedly in different shapes and suffer slaughter, subjection and other disagreeable things until | they had served their sentence (they did not 11
receive prophets either, then). When their sentence had been completed, they would return to the starting point and once more get to choose between staying where they were and going down for a test on earth. If they returned for a new test, they would be subjected to the law again; if they stayed, they would remain free of it. Presumably this means that they had become angels again. According to Ibn Mānūsh, animals were not subjected to the law because they were being punished, and angels were not subjected to it either because they were being rewarded: both reward and punishment were incompatible with obligation in his view. Prophets, too, were rewarded with exemption from legal obligations.[84]

Here we have another myth accounting for the diversity of living beings. Again we start with identical spirits, or rather particles. They are completely equal in all respects, a point also stressed by Origen:[85] God is scrupulously fair. Of course, if they were all identical, it is hard to see how they could make

82 Van Ess translates *al-ajzā' al-muqaddara* as "die gedachten Partikeln", which makes no sense to me. R. Freitag, *Seelenwanderung in der islamischen Häresie* (Berlin, 1985), 123, strangely has "vernunftsbegabten Monaden".

83 Ibn Ḥazm, iv, 198.–7.

84 Shahrastānī, 43 = i, 224.

85 Origen, *First Principles*, II, 9, 6, 134.

different choices, but this is another form of the perennial problem noted above. The idea of man as an atom, also attested for another Muʿtazilite at the time,[86] could owe something to the Qurʾānic account of the primordial covenant: all of humanity had to fit into Adam's loins, they are mere specks in Ḥadīth on the theme. The atoms are *muqaddara*, probably meaning numerically predetermined or finite, for Ibn Mānūsh shared with Ibn Khābiṭ and al-Naẓẓām the view that God had created everything in one go:[87] this would not be possible if the number of atoms were infinite. That the souls or spirits were finite in number was in any case quite an extremely common idea, found in Origen,[88] Manichaeism (where they are the captured particles of light), some forms of eternalism,[89] and rabbinic Judaism,[90] as well as in Plato.[91] As atoms, the spirits are indivisible, probably also required by the doctrine that all had been created at the same time.[92] But what God had created at one and the same time was the whole world, not just living beings, so the atoms must include the entire material creation: Ibn Mānūsh probably shared the view that everything, even inanimate objects, had minds.

Like Ibn Khābiṭ's myth, that of Ibn Mānūsh testifies to interaction with Zoroastrianism. Most strikingly, the pre-existing particles are now given a choice: they can choose to be tested, i.e. by going into the material world, or they can refuse it. Those who opt for the test can hope to pass it, as some do, so embodiment is not quite a freely chosen condition, but it is certainly a freely chosen risk. Why those who fail the test should be reincarnated numerous times before reaching the status of humans and animals is not clear, but it is striking that demons no longer figure in the story: those who stay behind seem to be the angels while those who accept the test are the future humans and animals; no other beings are mentioned. Finally, al-Baghdādī's summary suggests that eventually all would be saved, in line with both Origenist and Zoroastrian teaching, but this is not explicitly stated.

86 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, xi, 311.6 (Hishām al-Fuwaṭī, who added that its seat was in the heart), 329 ff. (polemics against the idea).

87 Ibn Ḥazm, iv, 198.6 = *TG* vi, 215 (no. 25, b); Shahrastānī, 43 = i, 224.

88 Origen, *First Principles*, II, 9/1, 129.

89 Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, i, 91, where it is the tacit premise on which belief in reincarnation is based.

90 Cf. the references given below, notes 120–126.

91 Plato, *Republic*, 611a, here too in explanation of reincarnation.

92 Cf. Van Ess, *TG*, iii, 368: Ibn al-Rāwandī taunted al-Naẓẓām with allegedly believing that an infinite number of bodies (in the sense of three-dimensional objects) had been created in one go, probably with reference to al-Naẓẓām's rejection of atomism.

Al-Baghdādī briefly outlines part of a third Muʿtazilite myth, this time by one (Aḥmad b. Muḥammad) al-Qaḥṭī or Qaḥtabī.[93] According to this man, the spirits or particles (no noun is used) asked of their own accord to be differentiated in rank, and God told them that this required a test, which might involve punishment. So they, presumably meaning some of them, refused the test: this was what God referred to when he said, "We offered the trust (*amāna*) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it, and were afraid of it, but man carried it. Surely, he is | sinful, very foolish" 12
(Q. 33:72).[94] If this is Origen's myth by origin, nothing else is left of it. Here, all the spirits or atoms created by God are given a choice, including those which become inanimate things such as heaven, the earth and the mountains; and what they choose is a test in the sense of subjection to the law. Everything is endowed with rationality; indeed the heavens, the earth and the mountains may be more rational than humans in that they refused the law, whereas the foolish humans were rash enough to accept it even though they would not be able to obey it. Presumably, some of them eventually achieve the higher rank they desired, but this part of the myth is not told.

Al-Baghdādī also alludes to a fourth myth according to which God created the spirits and imposed legal obligations on (*kallafa*) those who he knew would obey him, not on those who would disobey him; the latter disobeyed him in the beginning, i.e. in pre-existence, and were punished by metamorphosis (*maskh*) and reincarnation (*naskh*) in diverse bodies in accordance with their sins.[95] This is somewhat unclear. Al-Baghdādī seems to be saying that God only imposed legal obligations on the angels, not on all those guilty of a primordial act of disobedience, but this can hardly be what he means. More likely is the thought that humans are those spirits who passed the primordial test, and that God imposed moral obligations on them, whereas he did not impose any on all those who failed the test and who therefore had no hope of salvation; imprisoned in animals and inanimate objects, they would move around in diverse bodies by way of punishment until the end of the world, when they would cease to exist. This myth is attributed to "Abū Muslim al-Ḥarrānī", which one automatically emends to al-Khurāsānī; but though Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī is in fact credited with belief in reincarnation (reflecting the beliefs of those who made a hero of him),[96] we must have a Muʿtazilite doctrine here. Its author

93 On him, see Van Ess, *TG*, iii, 442 ff.

94 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 259 = *TG* vi, 221. This verse is also cited by those who believe everything to be endowed with mind in Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, v, 288.

95 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 259.

96 Cf. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-iṣlāḥ*, Ḥ. Mīnūchihr and M. Muḥaqqiq, eds (Tehran, 1377/

is presumably Faḍl al-Ḥadathī (sometimes al-Ḥarrānī).[97] Ibn Khābiṭ is regularly associated with this man, and it would be odd for al-Baghdādī to mention the one and not the other. Al-Shahrastānī credits Ibn Khābiṭ's myth to both of them,[98] but Abū Yaʿlā makes it clear that their myths were different; he briefly summarises the views of Ibn Khābiṭ and Ibn Mānūsh (here Nāmūs) and concludes by telling us that Faḍl al-Ḥadathī (here al-Ḥarathī) believed all things, whether animals, plants or inanimate things such as rocks, to contain spirits which had been moved there by way of punishment for their sins (*arwāḥ mansūkha wa-muʿadhdhaba bi-ajrāmihā*).[99] This is also what al-Baghdādī reports. Origen has been completely left behind here. The panpsychist and reincarnationist universe that these stories of pre-existence are meant to explain is entirely Iranian; the rest is entirely Muslim.

(c) *Why Did Mankind Accept?*

In making embodiment a freely chosen condition or risk, Ibn Mānūsh and al-Qaḥṭabī restored the problem, glaring in the Zoroastrian myth, of how to explain that the divine beings accepted embodiment, or the test by which they risked embodiment. One version of the Zoroastrian myth says that the *fravahr*s were persuaded by the promise of Zoroaster. The idea is that this would make embodied life more bearable, but it is not much of a reward for spirits in the presence of God. Another reward held out is the future body, or the renovation in general, but this makes even less sense. Believers in preexistence always saw embodiment as a step down from the original condition: what they hoped for was to become ethereal divine beings again. Origen did
13 of course accept the doctrine of | bodily resurrection, but he envisaged the resurrection body as made of matter so subtle that in effect it was spiritual, and he was duly accused of not believing in bodily resurrection at all.[100] The Zoroastrians likewise envisaged bodies in the *mēnōg* as subtle and made of

1998), 161.10 (Abū Muslim and Bihāfarīdh both believed in *tanāsukh*); Ibn Ḥazm, i, 90.–9; ii, 115.12, cf. iv, 180.7, and the MSS in I. Friedlaender, 'The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Ḥazm (i)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 28 (1907), 36. Van Ess rightly rejects the idea that Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī is intended here (*TG*, iii, 445; vi, 445).

97 For the variations on his *nisba*, see I. Friedlaender, 'The Heterodoxies of the Shiites in the Presentation of Ibn Ḥazm (ii)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 29 (1908), 11.

98 Shahrastānī, 42–43 = i, 223.

99 Abū Yaʿlā Ibn al-Farrā', *al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, W.Z. Ḥaddād, ed. (Beirut, 1974), 110.9 = *TG* vi, 219, no. 31.

100 McGuckin, *Origen*, s.v. 'Resurrection' (Daley).

light, and it was in such bodies, which would not cast a shadow, that many of them hoped to return. But the priests of Fārs never lose an opportunity to remind their audience that the future body would be real, and indeed our very own reassembled, explicitly mentioning that it would cast a shadow too, probably by way of competition with Christianity and polemics against belief in reincarnation.[101] This is yet another way in which the myth of the *fravahr*s can be seen to come from a non-Persian form of Zoroastrianism: it does not go well with the doctrine of bodily resurrection in the normal sense of the word.

If the pre-existing spirits had the option of staying in the presence of God, what could possibly have induced them to leave? Plotinus, who held the soul to descend in response to an irresistible impulse, compared it to the way some men are "moved unreasoningly to noble deeds".[102] This is likely to be how the warlike aristocrats of Sasanian Iran perceived it, too: God wanted the *fravahr*s to go on a terrible mission, and being heroes, they accepted the task, fully aware that they might come to grief, but assured of ultimate salvation. Differently put, they went into the world in the same spirit in which they went into battle in the here and now. The Muʿtazilites solved the problem differently, however.

According to Ibn Khābiṭ and either Faḍl al-Ḥadathī or Ibn Mānūsh, the future humans began their existence in the first paradise, presumably the lowest heaven. It was from there that they fell into the material world, and also there that those who refused the test remained. There were two higher categories of paradise, however. One was the paradise in which people ate, drank and had sex, in short, the Qurʾānic paradise (and indeed that of the Pahlavi books, and of some Christians as well);[103] the other was a higher realm in which the rewards were purely spiritual.[104] This was undoubtedly where all the Muʿtazilite Sufis wanted to be. Those who refused the test and stayed where they were are clearly the angels, or the general run of them: humans who passed the test or worked their way back ranked higher than they did even

101 Cf. A. de Jong, 'Shadow and Resurrection', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, NS 9 (1995), 215–224; Shaked, *Dualism*, 33; Crone, *Nativist Prophets*, ch. 15.

102 Plotinus, *Enneads*, A.H. Armstrong, ed. and tr., IV/13 (Cambridge, Mass., 1966–1989), 19–20.

103 There will be food and all the pleasures that humans enjoy, including sexual intercourse without procreation, in the paradisical state after the renovation (e.g. *PRDd* 48:58–60, 106; *GrBd* 34:24 (*Bd* 30:26 West)). For Christians who saw the resurrection as a promise that they would never lack the power to "eat and drink and do all things that pertain to flesh and blood", see Origen, *First Principles*, II, 11, 2; Gregory of Nyssa, 'On the Making of Man', in P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church translated into English*, V (Edinburgh, 1892) (repr. Grand Rapids, MI, n.d.), sect. 20.

104 Shahrastānī, 43 = i, 224–225.

in the Qurʾānic paradise, and even more so in the highest heaven. The abode of entitlement (*istiḥqāq*) was nobler than that of benefaction (*tafḍīl*), as Ibn Mānūsh declared.[105] The Muʿtazilite myth thus incorporates a new element, not Zoroastrian, but rather Jewish by origin, namely the relative merits in the eyes of God of angels and human beings.

(d) *Aftermath*

The Muʿtazilite Sufis look like mere curiosities today, and there were certainly also contemporaries who found them odd, not least al-Jāḥiẓ, who derided their belief in the rational nature of everything and mocked them as *juhhāl al-ṣūfiyya*. But they were sufficiently important for him to write against them; al-Kaʿbī thought highly of Ibn Khābiṭ,[106] and al-Shahrastānī even describes Ibn Mānūsh as *shaykh al-muʿtazila*.[107] The Muʿtazilite Sufis were Islamising doctrines they had brought with them from their ancestral background by reading them into the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, but this is what everyone was doing at the time; and though some of their doctrines were more outlandish than others from a traditional Muslim point of view, it was by no means obvi-
14 ous that Islam was incompatible with the doctrine of | pre-existence. It was widely accepted that special figures such as Muḥammad and the imams had existed before they were born,[108] and the astrologer Abū Maʿshar (d. 272/886) is reported to have held the soul (of any human being) to have descended from the sphere of light.[109] Similar doctrines remained current among the Sufis. Junayd (d. 298/910) believed that we have existed in God before coming into this world, finding proof of it in the Qurʾānic account of God's covenant with Adam's seed.[110] According to al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. c. 320/938), mystics recognize each other when they meet "for the spirits are created two thousand years before the bodies and have sniffed at each other, the way horses do".[111] Al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), on the other hand, condemned the doctrine that the spirit is

105 Baghdādī, *Farq*, 258 = *TG* vi, 220 (no. 33, e).

106 Shahrastānī, 42 = i, 220.

107 Shahrastānī, 43 = i, 224.

108 Cf. T. Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde* (Stockholm, 1918), 313 ff.; U. Rubin, 'Pre-existence and Light: Aspects of the Concept of Nūr Muḥammad', *Israel Oriental Studies*, 5 (1975), 62–119.

109 *EIr*., s.v. 'Abū Maʿšar' (Pingree).

110 A.H. Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd* (London, 1976), ch. 7 (relating the idea to Neoplatonism), cf. the Arabic texts, p. 40 ff. (drawn to my attention by Stephen Menn).

111 Andrae, *Person Muhammeds*, 315n, citing Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-uṣūl*, 164.

created in the divine realm (*malakūt*), to which it returns when it is purified.[112] But ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 735/1336) corrects the misconception that a certain story about ʿAlī could be adduced in proof of reincarnation, by stating as a fact that God created the spirits thousands of years before the body.[113] Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640), too, held the "Adamic" or noetic soul to have pre-existence, and found proof of it in the Qurʾānic account of God's covenant with humanity in Adam's loins. But by then, of course, the idea of pre-existence had long been familiar from Neoplatonism (and the soul had replaced the spirit). Mullā Ṣadrā did not think that the soul had been connected with the body by free choice. He also denied that belief in pre-existence necessitated belief in reincarnation, but like Origen and many Zoroastrians, he envisaged the future body as spiritual.[114]

Plato

Both the Zoroastrians and Origen postulated a double creation, one spiritual and one material. Both held humans to have existed in the spiritual world before coming into its material counterpart; both envisaged them as returning in spiritual bodies, and both also inclined to the belief that hell would cease to exist (though Ahriman would not be redeemed, since he was not a fallen angel).[115] Yet there is no reason to think that either side was indebted to the other. The Zoroastrian ideas in question predate Origen,[116] while Origen's are rooted in Plato, often via Philo.[117] There are obvious affinities between

112 B. Radtke, 'How can Man reach the Mystical Union? Ibn Ṭufayl and the Divine Spark', in L.I. Conrad, ed., *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl* (Leiden, 1996), 188, citing Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, 435:7 f.

113 Quoted in M. Molé, 'Les Kubrawiya entre sunnisme et shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècle de l'hégire', *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 29 (1961), 86.

114 J.W. Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: an Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Princeton, 1981), 140–141, 144–170.

115 For an exception, see *Dd*, question 36:18, which informs us that hell will serve as a penitentiary for the demons and wicked ones that they have deceived "until the appointed time when the punishment of demons and the penitence of the wicked are accomplished".

116 The distinction between a spiritual and a material creation was presupposed in the *Varshtmānsr Nask* on the reluctance of the ox to be created in the *gētīg* (above, note 9) and the *Spand Nask*, on the creation of Zoroaster in the *gētīg* (above, note 32). Both are undatable, but placing them in the third century AD or later is surely impossible. Bodies that would not cast a shadow are attested already (in the context of universal eschatology) in Theopompus (4th century BC) as quoted by Plutarch (de Jong, 'Shadow and Resurrection'). For the *terminus ante quem* of the myth of the *fravahr*s, see below.

117 Cf. G. Bostock, 'The Sources of Origen's Doctrine of Pre-existence', in *Origeniana Quarta*,

Zoroastrianism and Platonism, however, and Zoroastrians are likely to have found Plato congenial when they were introduced to him, as they probably were well before Sasanian times. The myth of the *fravahr*s could be taken to suggest familiarity with Plato's *Timaeus*.

In the *Timaeus*, Plato describes the demiurge as creating the human souls out of the leftover from the World Soul and distributing them among the stars. The demiurge then addresses these souls. He tells them that the laws of the
15 universe make it necessary for them to become incarnate and that their | conjunction with a body will expose them to sensations of pleasure, pain, desire and other passions which will make things difficult for them. Those who master their own passions and cultivate virtue will return to their stars after death and live a happy life there; those who give in to their passions will be returned to the earth, where they will be reincarnated in ever more degraded forms, first as women, next as animals of diverse kinds, until they make amends.[118]

In the *Timaeus* as in the myth of the *fravahr*s, God addresses the souls about to be placed in bodies; here as there, he gives them a task to fulfil; and here as there, hardship is foreseen by God rather than the souls themselves. But the tasks are quite different. Plato's souls have to struggle as individuals, trying to control the passions in their own bodies. By contrast, the Zoroastrian souls have to contend with evil envisaged as an external enemy, and they do so in serried ranks as a battalion of Ohrmazd's troops. The happy ends are also quite different. In Plato, the best the souls can hope for is recovery of their original state and in between there is reincarnation. In the Zoroastrian myth as told in the ninth-century books there is no reincarnation and it is bodily resurrection in a renovated world that the *fravahr*s can look forward to: the focus is entirely on collective salvation, not on the individual ascent of the soul after death to Ohrmazd's presence, though the latter is an equally venerable Zoroastrian conception and one which lends itself much better to fusion with Plato.[119] Set against the *Timaeus*, the myth of the *fravahr*s as told in the Pahlavi books so neatly captures the ethos of official Zoroastrianism that one can read it as a rejoinder to Plato: virtue consists in fulfilling one's task as a member of Zoroastrian society, by taking up one's assigned positions, obeying one's superiors, in war or in peace, not in withdrawing to cultivate one's individual virtue in private; and virtue has to be accumulated now, not

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L. Liess, ed. (Innsbruck, 1987), 259–264. Both Tzamalikos, *Origen*, and M.J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot, 2002), show that Origen was not a Platonist in the sense of regarding Plato as authoritative, but he certainly was one by general cultural formation.

118 Plato, *Timaeus*, 41D–E.

119 See the references and discussion in Crone, *Nativist Prophets*, 350–353.

later, for there is only one life. In short, the message comes across as anti-ascetic. By contrast, the versions which circulated in Mesopotamia and the Zagros mountains will have focused on reincarnation and release for ascent to the heavenly realm in agreement with Plato,[120] as it still does (filtered through Sufism) in the version told by the Ahl-i Ḥaqq.

The Jews

This brings us to the Jews. There were Jews on the Roman side of the border who accepted Plato's idea of pre-existence, notably Philo (d. c. 50).[121] Another example is the anonymous author of *Wisdom of Solomon*, active in Alexandria about the same time.[122] Their writings, however, formed part of Greek heritage that Jews rejected under the twin impact of the destruction of the Temple and the rise of Christianity. When we next hear about belief in pre-existence among them, it does not seem to be Plato's.

The doctrine of pre-existence appears in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch (*2 Baruch*), originally composed in Hebrew after the destruction of Jerusalem, probably around 100 in Palestine, but extant only in a Christian redaction. It says that "When Adam sinned and death was decreed … the multitude of those who would be born was numbered, and for that number a place was prepared where the living ones might live and where the dead might be preserved".[123] Here as so often, the total number of human beings is fixed in advance, and those awaiting birth are being kept in a special place along with the dead, without any suggestion that the dead would be born again. In *4 Ezra*, the dead are preserved | in storerooms (*promptuaria*), but here there is no mention 16
of the unborn.[124] The unborn reappear in the Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch

120 Compare Ps.-Nāshiʿ (probably Jaʿfar b. Ḥarb, d. 236/850), *Uṣūl al-niḥal*, in J. van Ess, *Frühe muʿtazilitische Häresiographie* (Beirut, 1971), 57–58.

121 Philo, *de Somniis*, I, 138–139; *de Plantatione*, 14.

122 *Wisdom of Solomon* 8:19: a noble soul fell to the author's lot, or rather being noble, he (identified with the soul) entered an undefiled body; cf. S. Winston, tr. and comm., *The Wisdom of Solomon*, (New York, 1979), 197, 198 ("as clear a statement of the concept of preexistent souls as one could wish"), in disagreement with E.E. Urbach, *The Sages* (2nd edn, Jerusalem, 1979), 235–236.

123 *2 Baruch*, in J.H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, i (*Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*) (New York, 1983), 23:4.

124 *Fourth Book of Ezra*, R.L. Bensley, ed. (Cambridge, 1895); B.M. Metzger, tr., in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, i, 7:32, 95.

(*2 Enoch*),[125] a work with an even longer transmission history than *2 Baruch*, and also in rabbinic writings from the later third century onwards. One rabbi is quoted as mentioning "the souls that were still to be born" as something taken for granted;[126] another identified the seventh heaven, ʿAravot, as that part of heaven which contained, among other things, the souls of the righteous (dead) along with the spirits and souls of those yet to be born and the dew of resurrection.[127] At some point, the place in which the unborn souls were kept was identified as a treasury or storehouse. Jerome, writing in c. 410, knew this as a belief of certain churchmen.[128] The first attestation on the Jewish side is often said to be the statement of the third/fourth-century R. Assi that the Son of David would not come before all the souls in *gūf* had been used up,[129] but Urbach argues that *gūf* should be taken in its literal sense of "body" here: R. Assi was saying that the Messiah would not come until all the pre-existing souls had been put into bodies, as in the parallel dictum that he would not come "until all the souls that were originally planned (by God) to be born have been born".[130] Indeed, one wonders if it was by misunderstanding of R. Assi's statement that the treasury came to acquire its strange name of *gūf*. At all events, the treasury is unambiguously attested under that name in *3 Enoch*, a Hebrew work also known as *Sefer Hekhalot* which may have reached its current shape around 600 AD in Babylonia. Here the angel Metatron shows R. Ishmael the souls of the righteous dead and the souls of those who have not yet been created, which are kept in the *gūf*.[131]

Urbach stresses that the rabbinic conception of the pre-existing soul is quite un-Platonic: there is no sense of the body as a punishment or prison.[132]

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125 *2 Enoch*, in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, i, 23:5 (long version).

126 Urbach, *Sages*, 236.

127 *Babylonian Talmud* (hereafter *BT*), Ḥagiga, 12b. Another passage says that the souls of the righteous are kept under God's throne (*BT*, Shabbath 152a).

128 Jerome, *Lettres*, J. Labourt, ed. and tr. (Paris, 1949–1963), vii, letter 126.1, deriding the idea as silly.

129 *BT*, Yevamot 62a; 63a; similarly ʿAvodah Zarah, 5a; Niddah 13b, sometimes attributed to R. Yose. It is interpreted as a treasury in Rashi (with reference to the ʿAvodah Zarah passage): "There is a treasure-house called Gūf, and at the time of Creation all the souls destined to be born were formed and placed there" (cited in Urbach, *Sages*, 237). Similarly L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Baltimore, 1998), v, 75, note 19; M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* (New York, 1967) (first publ. 1903), s.v. '*Gūf*' (with reference to the Yevamot passage); and many others.

130 *Genesis Rabba*, 24:4; Urbach, *Sages*, 237.

131 *3 Enoch*, P. Alexander, tr., in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, i, par. 43.

132 Urbach, *Sages*, 241.

This raises the suspicion that the source of inspiration is Zoroastrian, but as things stand, this cannot be proved. The idea that the souls of the righteous were preserved in God's presence does appear already in the Gāthās (in some translations),[133] and the righteous dead and future humans figure together as *fravashi*s in Yasht 13 and elsewhere. But all *fravashi*s are active, not asleep, and the Zoroastrian books never quite mention a treasury of unborn souls either, as noted already, only one of merit[134] (a less distinctive idea which is also found on the Jewish side).[135]

For all that, there can be no doubt that the myth of the *fravahr*s touched upon Jewish beliefs. In *Genesis Rabba*, a Palestinian rabbi is quoted as saying that God "took counsel with the souls of the righteous and sat with them before creating the world".[136] Here the righteous still to be born are consulted, not about their own creation, but rather that of the world in general. There are also accounts in which the consultation is specifically about the creation of man, but here it is the angels that God | consults. The latter theme is found 17
in both *Genesis Rabba* and other rabbinic works in explanation of Gen. 1:26, where God says "let us make man", or "shall we make man?", as one could also translate it. "When he (God) came to create the first man, he consulted the ministering angels. He said, 'shall we make man?' ", as one version tells us.[137] Both versions show the rabbis to have shared the Zoroastrian belief that God had consulted celestial beings in connection with the creation, but they stopped short of letting mankind consent to its own creation. That they owed the idea to their Iranian neighbours was recognized long ago.[138] As in the Zoroastrian myth, the celestial beings foresee hardship and trouble, but not in the form of all the evil that an external enemy will inflict on mankind: rather, the evil is all the bad things that humans will do themselves. "What will be his character?", as

133 Y. 49:10, as translated e.g. by Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 382. Differently H. Humbach, ed. and tr., *Die Gathas des Zarathustra* (Heidelberg, 1959), i, 145, who replaces the souls with *Atemhauche*, explaining them as words and ritual songs (ii, 82). But they are souls again in Humbach's revised English translation (Heidelberg, 1991, with the collaboration of J. Elfenbein and P.O. Skjærvø).

134 Cf. the reference given above, note 17. Y. 49:10, discussed in the preceding note, is presumably the starting point of this idea.

135 Cf. E.E. Urbach, 'Treasures Above', in G. Nahon and C. Touati, eds, *Hommage à Georges Vajda* (Louvain, 1980), esp. 120–121.

136 *Genesis Rabba*, viii, 7.

137 *Genesis Rabba*, viii, 4; cf. viii, 5, 8; Ginzberg, *Legends*, i, 52 ff., with copious references in v, 69, note 12.

138 *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1901–1906), s.v. 'Pre-existence'.

the angels ask in one version.[139] They do not like God's idea, or they are divided in their opinion. But now the story diverges sharply from its Zoroastrian counterpart, for far from trying to persuade the angels, God simply overrules them, or worse, he wipes out one company of angels after the other until they agree; or he cheats by only telling them about the righteous men that will appear, suppressing the information that wicked men will also appear among them.[140] His behaviour could not be more unlike Ahura Mazda's (the same is true of a later midrash in which the old Zoroastrian theme of reluctance to enter the material world reappears: here God summarily overrules the objections of the soul summoned from Eden and compels it to enter a drop of sperm "against its will").[141] In other words, the rabbis fleshing out Gen. 1:26 seem to be telling the same story as the Zoroastrian myth of the *fravahr*s, adapting it to bring out their own fundamental convictions and thus neutralise the rival account. To the Jews, God was the sovereign of the universe; to the Zoroastrians, he was embattled goodness. To the devotees of the sovereign deity, the Zoroastrian God was pitifully weak; to the devotees of embattled goodness, the God of the Jews was all too reminiscent of Ahriman: prone to anger and violence, and strangely willing to inflict harm on his creation. He displayed these features again when he expelled Adam and Eve from paradise, another story that Zoroastrians found deeply distasteful.[142]

The myth of the *fravahr*s may also have left a trace elsewhere in the Jewish (and Christian, and ultimately also the Islamic) tradition in two versions of another famous myth. In Genesis 6:2–4, we read that in the antediluvian past, "sons of God" consorted with "daughters of men", siring offspring whom later readers took to have caused all the corruption and bloodshed that God wiped out with the flood. The passage is rooted in an ancient myth about rebellion in the pantheon, but by Hellenistic times the "sons of God" were understood as angels (of the type called Watchers) rather than deities, and the story was developed in the Enoch literature, which bred a huge number of variant ver-

139 *Genesis Rabba*, viii, 4.

140 *Genesis Rabba*, viii, 4; BT, Sanhedrin 38b.

141 *Midrash tanḥūma-Yelammedenu*, *pequde*, 3, S.A. Berman, tr. (Hoboken, NJ, 1996), 653 f. (cf. the editorial introduction, xii, placing the compilation in Babylonia in the later 8th or 9th century); Urbach, *Sages*, 247 (citing 'The Formation of the Child' from A. Yellinek, ed., *Bet Ha-Midrash* (Jerusalem, 1938), i, 153–155); retold in H. Schwartz, *Tree of Souls: the Mythology of Judaism* (Oxford, 2004), 199–200 (no. 240); cf. also Ginzberg, *Legends*, i, 56–57; vi, 75 ff., note 20.

142 Cf. *Škand-Gūmānīk Vičār*, P.J. de Menasce, ed. and tr. (Fribourg-en-Suisse, 1945), chs 13–14.

sions and new accounts.[143] Oddly, three pre-Islamic works retell the story of the fallen angels in such a way as to deny that they were rebels: here as in the myth of the *fravahr*s, the celestial beings descend to earth in obedience to God. One wonders whether it was due to Jewish contact with Iran that they came to do so.

The first work is *Jubilees* (composed in Palestine in the mid-second century BC). Here the Watchers descend to the earth "in order to teach the sons of man, and perform judgement and | uprightness on the earth" without anything being 18
said about their sins.[144] Though the celestial beings are clearly combating evil on the earth, there is no use of military metaphors, and this makes it impossible to say whether the myth of the *fravahr*s is lurking in the background. It does not rule it out, for it was probably in the Sasanian period that human existence came to be systematically presented as a grand battle, both literal and metaphorical, against evil in all its forms; and Iranian ideas could have reached Hellenistic Palestine via the Jews of Babylonia. But substantive evidence is missing.

The second work is the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies, a Jewish Christian work composed in Greek in Syria, probably in Antioch or Edessa, around 300–320. Here we are told that "of the spirits who inhabit the heaven, the angels who dwell in the lowest heaven … asked that they might come into the life of men". They made this request because they were upset by the human lack of gratitude to God and wanted to convict and punish the guilty. They did not descend in human shape, however, but rather went through the Platonic chain of being. They started in the mineral realm as precious stones and convicted those who stole them, then they became reptiles (the vegetable stage is omitted), fishes, bird and eventually humans, and at this stage they were defeated by passions: they fell into cohabitation with women and their fiery substance turned into heavy flesh, so that they could no longer ascend to heaven.[145] This story could

143 Some of these variants denied that the sons of God were angels: they were just human beings of high birth, such as nobles or judges (thus the Jews), or they were sons of Seth who were seduced by the daughters of Cain (thus the Christians), cf. A.Y. Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: the Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge, 2005), 205 ff. See now also A. Annus, 'On the Origin of the Watchers: a Comparative Study of Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish Tradition', *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigraphica*, 19 (2010), 277–320, fielding a different origin for the Biblical passage.

144 *Jubilees*, O.S. Wintermute, tr., in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, i, 35–142, par. 4.18–20.

145 Clement of Alexandria (attrib.), *The Homilies*, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, tr., *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, xvii, vol. VIII (Edinburgh, 1870), 12–13.

perhaps be a Platonic development of the version found in *Jubilees*, but it is noteworthy that the evil they have to fight is lack of gratitude to God; they succumb to the same sin themselves, falling into the hands of Iblīs, as Abū ʿĪsā would have put it, when they experience the passions with which they have to contend as embodied human beings. It is also lack of gratitude to God which causes the spirits to sink to the level of humans and animals in Ibn Khābiṭ's myth about the celestial origin of humans and others, so there cannot be much doubt that the story of the fallen angels interacted with that about the *fravahr*s at some point. But it could of course have been after the composition of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies that it did so.

The third work is the above-mentioned *Sefer Hekhalot* (alias *3 Enoch*). Here we encounter three angels called ʿUzzah, ʿAzzah and ʿAzaʾel. The names are those of the sinful Watchers (originally there were hundreds of them, but there came to be only two or three of them in the course of time). However, the three Watchers are identified as ministering angels and we encounter them as residents of heaven, where they remind God, after the Flood, of what a bad idea it had been to create mankind: the story is linked with the theme of the relative standing in God's eye of angels and humans.[146] Later, we learn that it was those three angels who had taught mankind sorcery, which once more identifies them as the fallen Watchers, but again the redactor thinks of them as ministering angels, informing us that in the period before the flood, these angels used to come down to earth in companies and cohorts to execute God's will on earth.[147] The presentation is confusing because a story about sinful Watchers descending to the earth is being overwritten by another about obedient angels doing the same, and since *Sefer Hekhalot* was composed in Iraq, it is hard not to suspect that Sasanian stories about the *fravahr*s played a role in this. But again it is impossible to prove it.

When the Muslim exegete al-Kalbī (d. 146/763), a resident of Iraq, heard the story of the fallen angels, it was the version in which they descend in agreement with God that he picked up.[148] In agreement with the *Sefer Hekhalot*, his account only involves three angels, called ʿAzā, ʿAzāyā, and ʿAzazīl (they are reduced to two in the course of the story); but here as in the Pseudo-

146 *2 Enoch*, 4. For the earlier works, see Annus, 'Origin of the Watchers', 293.

147 *3 Enoch*, 5.

148 For what follows, see P. Crone, 'The *Book of Watchers* in the Qurʾān', in H. Ben-Shammai, S. Shaked, and S. Stroumsa, eds, *Exchange and Transmission across Cultural Boundaries: Philosophy, Mysticism and Science in the Mediterranean* (Jerusalem, 2013) [Ed.: reprinted in P. Crone, *The Qurʾānic Pagans and Related Matters*, vol. 1 of *Collected Studies in Three Volumes*, H. Siurua, ed. (Leiden, 2016), art. 7].

Clementines, they are outraged by human behaviour and receive permission to go down to ensure that God's law is obeyed. God gives them bodies for this purpose, with the predictable result that they soon sin as badly as the humans they have come to correct and can no longer ascend to heaven, not because their fiery | substance has turned into heavy flesh, but rather because they 19
have given away the secret formula they need for their ascent. There is nothing heroic about them here. Rather, they are self-righteous angels who think it is easy to be virtuous because they have no idea of what it is like to be a human: again we see that the story has been linked to the question of the relative status of angels and mankind. It was in this form that the story of the fallen angels was canonised in the Islamic tradition, eventually to travel back to the Jews.

The Muslim exegetes told the story of the fallen angels in explanation of Q. 2:102, where the angels in question appear under the names of Hārūt and Mārūt, Arabised forms of the names of two of the Zoroastrian *amahraspand*s.[149] Maybe there were Jews and/or Christians of the Sasanian empire who held the fallen Watchers to be the angels venerated by their erring neighbours: their own, true angels could not possibly have behaved in this fashion. As noted, the *fravahr*s also seem to have become *amahraspand*s in the account of the Ahl-i Ḥaqq (where there are seven of them),[150] but here it could reflect deference to the hegemonic tradition; for where the myth of the *fravahr*s says that humans without their bodies are really *fravahr*s, the *Dēnkard* says that without their bodies they are really *amahraspand*s.[151] What the *Dēnkard* meant is that human souls are immortal, not that the *amahraspand*s had gone into the word dressed in flesh, but there was nothing to stop others from inferring that two or three of them, or all seven, had done so.

If we assume that the myth of the *fravahr*s is reflected in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies, compiled c. 300–320 at the latest, we can rule out the possibility that the Zoroastrian myth was inspired by Origen (d. 254), Plotinus (d. 270), or Evagrius (d. 399). The Zoroastrians would seem to have formulated their myth of pre-existence independently of the Christians and the Neoplatonists, though possibly not independently of Plato himself.

149 P.J. de Menasce, 'Une légende indo-iranienne dans l'angélologie judéo-musulmane: à propos de Hārūt et Mārūt', *Etudes Asiatiques*, 1 (1947), 10–18.

150 Cf. the reference given above, note 39.

151 *DkM* in Molé, *Culte*, 471–472, no. 4 (*Dk* III, 51 in de Menasce, *Le troisième livre du Dēnkart*).

Conclusion

What do we learn from all this? The most obvious lesson is that the Zoroastrians were full participants in the big debates of late antiquity about the relationship between the spiritual and the material worlds, the nature of evil, the nature of our bodies, and what we are meant to be doing in this world. It is well known that Origenists, Neoplatonists, Jewish Platonists, and Gnostics believed in pre-existence while disagreeing wildly with one another about its implications. It is not so well known that the Zoroastrians believed in it too, and we hardly ever see their presence in accounts of the major religious issues of late antiquity. When we do see them (as in connection with Gnosticism), it is always as external purveyors of "influence" that they are presented, without much sense of what it might tell us about the Zoroastrians themselves. This is not surprising. The problem is not that the scholars of Near Eastern religion are Eurocentric or spellbound by the Greeks and Romans, as some would have it, but rather that the Zoroastrian sources are extremely difficult, even when they have been worked over in the most helpful of fashions by specialists. The many neighbouring fields one has to traverse in order to make sense of their fragmentary information are manifold and so riddled with controversial issues that blow up like mines at the lightest touch, that the task is utterly intimidating. But we cannot properly understand the religious developments of either side of the Euphrates without knowing about developments on both of them, so we have to take our cue from the *fravahr*s and venture into the fray.

In fact, it is not just the religious history of the Near East that is at stake. There is a nice postscript to the myth of the *fravahr*s in Menasseh ben Israel, the Portuguese rabbi who set up the Hebrew printing press in Amsterdam and who was painted by Rembrandt: he was an ardent believer in the pre-existence of souls. According to him, when God said, "Let us make man", he consulted the human souls before putting them into bodies so as to make sure
20 that he did not join them with matter against | their will.[152] He claimed to have found this in *Genesis Rabba*, but what one finds there is the story of how God consulted the souls of the righteous about the creation of the world. Of course, the creation of the world must have included that of mankind, and Menasseh seems to have fused this account with the stories of how God consulted the angels about the creation of Adam, told in *Genesis Rabba* in explanation of

152 J. van den Berg, 'Menasseh ben Israel, Henry More and Johannes Hoornbeeck on the Pre-existence of the Soul', in his *Religious Currents and Cross-Currents*, J. de Bruijn, P. Holtrop, and E. van der Wall, eds (Leiden, 1999), 66, citing Menasseh's *Conciliador* (published in 1632).

"Let us make man". But no version of these stories is in the least concerned to stress that God consulted the heavenly beings to avoid joining them with matter against their will or that humans consented to their own creation as embodied beings. Menasseh must have known the Zoroastrian myth or an interpretative tradition indebted to it. When he listed the great philosophers who had believed in pre-existence, he duly put Zoroaster first.[153] Henry More, one of the Cambridge Platonists of the 1650s who met Menasseh and cited him,[154] similarly listed Moses, Zoroaster and diverse Greeks, including Plato and Origen, among the great men who had preached the pre-existence of souls.[155] One way or the other, it would seem, the myth of the *fravahr*s had made it to Europe, highlighting what everyone these days knows to be the case: the boundaries between civilizations are porous.

153 J. van den Berg, 'Menasseh ben Israel, More and Hoornbeek', 68.

154 R. Lewis, 'Of "Origenian Platonisme": Joseph Glanvill on the Pre-existence of Souls', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 69 (2006), 267–300, 272.

155 Lewis, 'Glanvill on the Pre-existence of Souls', 273, citing More's treatise, *The Immortality of the Human Soul* (published in 1659), 247.

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